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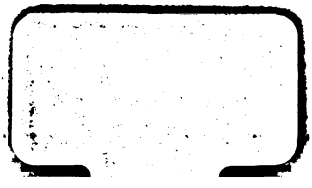
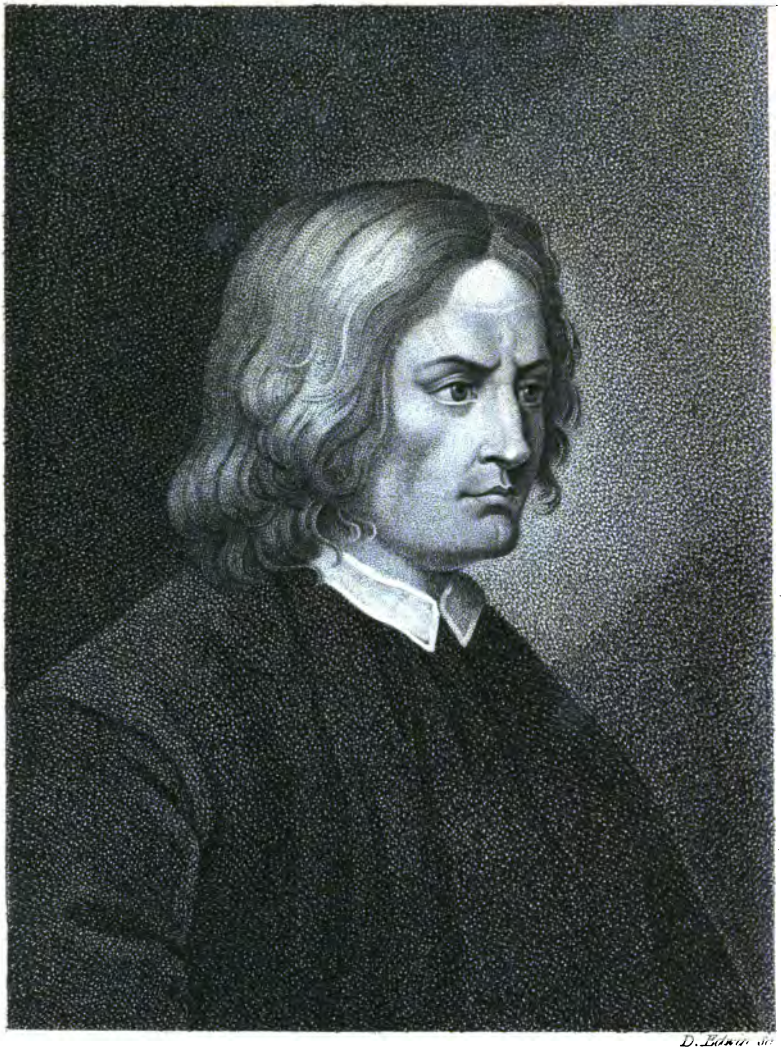


LIFE

OF

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

VOL. I.



D. Edwin Sc.

LAURENTIUS MEDICES,

cognomine Magnificus.

THE

LIFE

OF

LORENZO DE' MEDICI,

CALLED

THE MAGNIFICENT.

BY WILLIAM ROSCOE.

THE FIRST AMERICAN,
FROM THE FOURTH LONDON EDITION, CORRECTED,
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR BRONSON & CHAUNCEY.

1803.

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PREFACE.

THE close of the fifteenth, and the beginning of the sixteenth century, comprehend one of those periods of history which are entitled to our minutest study and inquiry. Almost all the great events from which Europe derives its present advantages, are to be traced up to those times. The invention of the art of printing, the discovery of the great western continent, the schism from the church of Rome, which ended in the reformation of many of its abuses, and established the precedent of reform, the degree of perfection attained in the fine arts, and the final introduction of true principles of criticism and taste, compose such an illustrious assemblage of luminous points, as cannot fail of attract-

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ing for ages the curiosity and admiration of mankind.

A complete history of these times has long been a great desideratum in literature; and whoever considers the magnitude of the undertaking will not think it likely to be soon supplied. Indeed, from the nature of the transactions which then took place, they can only be exhibited in detail, and under separate and particular views. That the author of the following pages has frequently turned his eye towards this interesting period is true, but he has felt himself rather dazzled than informed by the survey. A mind of greater compass, and the possession of uninterrupted leisure, would be requisite to comprehend, to select, and to arrange the immense variety of circumstances which a full narrative of those times would involve; when almost every city of Italy was a new Athens, and that favoured country could boast its historians, its poets, its orators, and its artists, who may contend with the great names of antiquity for the palm of mental excellence; when Venice, Milan, Rome, Florence, Bologna,

logna, Ferrara, and several other places, vied with each other, not in arms, but in science and in genius; and when the splendour of a court was estimated by the number and talents of learned men who illustrated it by their presence; each of whose lives and productions would, in a work of this nature, merit a full and separate discussion.

From this full blaze of talents, the author has turned towards a period, when its first faint gleams afford a subject, if not more interesting, at least more suited to his powers, and when, after a night of unexpected darkness, Florence again saw the sun break forth with a lustre more permanent, though perhaps not so bright. The days of Dante, of Boccaccio, and of Petrarca, were indeed past; but under the auspices of the House of Medici, and particularly through the ardour and example of Lorenzo, the empire of science and true taste was again restored.

After the death of Boccaccio, the surviver of that celebrated triumvirate who had

had carried their native tongue to an high pitch of refinement, and endeavoured, not without success, to introduce the study of the ancient languages into Italy, a general degradation of letters again took place; and the Italian tongue in particular was so far deteriorated, and debased, as, by the acknowledgment of the best criticks, to have become scarcely intelligible. The first symptoms of improvement appeared about the middle of the fifteenth century, when Cosmo de' Medici, after having established his authority in Florence, devoted the latter years of a long and honourable life to the encouragement, and even the study of philosophy, and polite letters. He died in 1464; and the infirm state of health of his son Piero, who was severely afflicted by the gout, did not permit him to make that progress in the path which his father had pointed out, that his natural disposition would otherwise have effected. After surviving him only about five years, the greater part of which time he was confined to a sick-bed, he died, leaving two sons; to the elder of whom, Lorenzo, the praise of having restored to literature its ancient honours

is principally due. In succeeding times, indeed, that praise has been almost exclusively bestowed on Giovanni de' Medici, afterwards Leo the Tenth, the second son of Lorenzo, who undoubtedly promoted the views, but never in any degree rivalled the talents of his father.

Certain it is that no man was ever more admired and venerated by his contemporaries, or has been more defrauded of his just fame by posterity, than Lorenzo de' Medici. Possessed of a genius more original and versatile than perhaps any of his countrymen, he has led the way in some of the most valuable species of poetick composition; and some of his productions stand unrivalled amongst those of his countrymen to the present day. Yet such has been the admiration paid by the Italians to a few favourite authors, that they have almost closed their eyes to the various excellencies with which his works abound. From the time of his death no general collection was made of his writings for upwards of sixty years; and after their first publication by Aldus in 1554, upwards of two

two centuries elapsed without a new edition. Neglected in Italy, they seem to have been unknown to the rest of Europe. A French historian [a], in whose narrative Lorenzo makes a conspicuous figure, assures his readers that the writings of this great man, as well in verse as prose, are irrecoverably lost; and that he would no longer be known as an author, were it not from the commendations bestowed upon him by his friends, and the attention paid to him by Paulus Jovius, who has assigned a place to his memory in his eulogies on the modern writers of Italy.

But we are not to consider Lorenzo de' Medici merely in the character of an author, and a patron of learning. As a statesman he was undoubtedly the most extraordinary person of his own, or perhaps of any time. Though a private citizen and a merchant of Florence, he not only obtained the decided control of that state

[a] Varillas, Anecdotes de Florence, ou l'histoire secrete de la Maison de Medicis. *p.* 149. *Ed. La Haye*, 1687.

state, at a period when it abounded with men of the greatest talents and acuteness, but raised himself to the rank of sole arbiter of Italy, and produced no inconsiderable effect upon the politicks of Europe. Without attempting to subjugate his native place, he laid the foundation of the future greatness of his family. His son and his nephew were both, at a short interval from each other, raised to the pontifical dignity; and in the succeeding centuries his descendants became connected by marriage with the first European sovereigns. The protection afforded by him to all the polite arts gave them a permanent foundation in Italy. In the establishment of publick libraries, schools, and seminaries of learning, he was equally munificent, indefatigable, and successful; and these objects were all accomplished by a man who died at the early age of forty-four years.

It is not, however, the intention of the author of the following work to confine himself merely to the relation of the life of an individual, however illustrious. Of a family of whom so much has been said, and

so

so little with certainty known, a more particular account cannot be uninteresting. In aiming at this purpose, he has been unavoidably led to give some account of the rise of modern literature, and particularly to notice many contemporary authors, whose reputation, at least in this country, has not yet been adequate to their merits. In an age when long and dangerous expeditions are undertaken to develop the manners of barbarians, or to discover the source of a river, it will surely not be thought an useless attempt, to endeavour to trace some of those minute and almost imperceptible causes, from which we are to deduce our present proficiency in letters, in science, and in arts.

Among the several narratives hitherto published of the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, the most ancient is that of Niccolo Valori a Florentine, eminent for his rank and learning, the contemporary and friend of Lorenzo. This account, written not inelegantly in Latin, and which composes a small octavo volume of sixty-seven pages, remained in manuscript, till Laurentius Mehus

Mehus gave it to the publick in 1749. An Italian translation had indeed been published at Florence, as early as the year 1560. The principal events in the life of Lorenzo are here related with accuracy and fidelity; but upon the whole it gives us too distant and indistinct a view of him. Though sensible in some respects of the magnitude of his subject, Valori seems not to have been sufficiently aware of the distinguishing characteristicks of Lorenzo—the strength, extent, and versatility of his mind. Hence he has exhibited him only in one principal point of view; either wholly omitting, or at most, slightly noticing his many other endowments. Closely adhering to his purpose, he confines himself to too small a circle, and enters not into those discussions respecting collateral events and circumstances, which a full display of the character of Lorenzo requires. The work of Valori may, however, be considered, not only as a well-written and authentick piece of biography, but as the foundation of all subsequent efforts on the same subject; although it wants that interest which it would have

derived from a closer and more intimate examination of the temper, the character, and the writings of Lorenzo.

By what strange fatality it happened, that the reputation of the most eminent man of his own age should have fallen into almost absolute neglect in the course of that which immediately succeeded, it is difficult to discover; particularly when we consider that the Italians have been by no means inattentive to their national glory, and that the memoirs of the lives of many of the contemporaries of Lorenzo, who were inferiour to him in every point of view, have been fully and even ostentatiously set forth. Whatever was the cause, it is certain, that from the publication of the work of Valori in its Italian dress, till the year 1763, no professed account of Lorenzo de' Medici made its appearance in publick; although few authors have touched upon the history of those times without paying him the passing tribute of their applause. This is the more extraordinary, as the materials for enlarging, and improving the narrative of Valori, were obvious.

In

In the year last mentioned, the poems of Lorenzo were reprinted at Bergamo; and a new account of the life of the author was prefixed to the work [b]. From this, however, little is to be expected, when it is understood that the biographer in his introduction, acknowledges that it is entirely founded on that of Valori; upon whose authority he solely relies, and protests against being answerable for any fact alleged by him, further than that authority warrants. To an exertion of this kind, as he justly observes, neither the deep research of criticism, nor the assistance of rare books, was necessary. In the few attempts which he has made to afford additional information, he has resorted principally to Negri [c], and Varillas [d], whose authority, nevertheless, he has himself deservedly impeached; and whose inaccuracy renders their testimony of

[b] Poesie del Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, con alcune Memorie attenenti alla sua vita, Testimonianze, &c. Bergamo, 1763, appresso Pietro Lancellotti.

[c] Istoria degli scrittori Fiorentini, opera postuma del P. Giulio Negri. *Ferrara*, 1722.

[d] Anecd. de Florence. ut sup.

of little weight, when not expressly confirmed by other writers.

About twenty years since several learned Italians united in drawing up memoirs of such of their countrymen as had distinguished themselves in different branches of science and arts [e]; and the life of Lorenzo, amongst others, fell to the pen of P. Bruno Bruni, professor of divinity in Florence. Unfortunately, however, it was executed without any new researches, being entirely compiled from previous publications; and it must be owned that the work derives no advantages from the professional prejudices or opinions of its author. The conspiracy of the Pazzi is one of the most striking events that ever engaged the attention of the historian; and the circumstances which accompanied it compose a body of evidence as accurate and authentick as history can produce. But the delicacy of the biographer shrunk from the relation of an incident, that involved in the guilt

[e] Elogj degli Uomini illustri Toscani. *In Lucca*, 1771, &c. *4 vol. 8vo.*

guilt of premeditated assassination, the Vicar of Christ upon earth! This event is accordingly passed over with a general reference to previous relations; and an annotation is subjoined, tending to impeach the evidence of one who was an eye-witness of the transaction, and whose narrative was laid before the publick immediately after the event took place[f]. No extraordinary number of pages was devoted to the work; and it may be enough to remark, that the resemblance of Lorenzo de' Medici does not well associate with a set of petty portraits, hung up by way of ornament, in frames of equal sizes. In order to do justice to such a subject, a larger canvass is necessary.

In enumerating the labours of my predecessors, it may not be improper more particularly to notice the singular work of Varillas, to which I have before had occasion

[f] Angeli Politiani Conjurationis Pactianæ anni 1478 Commentarium, in eodem anno excusum, *in 4to sine loci et typographi nominibus*, iterum typis impressum Neapoli anno 1769, curâ et studio Joannis Adimari ex Marchionibus Bumbæ.

sion to refer. This book, written in a lively style, with great pretensions to secret information from manuscripts in the French king's library, has more the resemblance of a romance than of an authentick narrative; and if we may judge of the author's private anecdotes, from his misrepresentations and mistakes in matters of more general notoriety, we shall frequently be compelled to consider them rather as the offspring of his own imagination, than as substantiated facts. The absurdities of this author have frequently been exposed by Bayle[g], who has in many instances pointed out his glaring perversions of the relation of Paulus Jovius, the veracity of whom as an historian is itself sufficiently equivocal. The accuracy of Varillas may in some degree be determined by the singular list of books and manuscripts from which he professes to have derived his information, the very existence of some of which yet rests on his own authority.

Such

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[g] Dictionnaire Historique et Critique, *Ari*, *Politien*, &c.

Such, however, being the attempts that had been made to exhibit to the publick the life and labburs of Lorenzo de' Medici, I conceived that there could be no great degree of arrogance in endeavouring to give a more full and particular account of them: Nor was I deterred from this undertaking by the consideration, that Providence had placed my lot beyond the limits of that favoured country,

" Ch' Appenin parte, e'l mar circonda, e l'Alpe."

The truth is, that even in a remote part of this remote kingdom, and deprived of the many advantages peculiar to seats of learning, I saw no difficulty in giving a more full, distinct, and accurate idea of the subject than could be collected from any performance I had then met with. For some years past, the works of the Italian writers had amused a portion of my leisure hours; a partiality for any particular object generally awakens the desire of obtaining further information respecting it; and from the perusal of the Italian poets, I was insensibly led to attend to the literary history of

of that cultivated nation. In tracing the rise of modern literature, I soon perceived that every thing great and excellent in science and in art, revolved round Lorenzo de' Medici, during the short but splendid era of his life, as a common centre, and derived from him its invariable preservation and support.—Under these impressions I began to collect such scattered notices respecting him as fell in my way; and the Florentine histories of Machiavelli, and Ammirato, the critical labours of Crescimbeni, Muratori, Bandini, and Tiraboschi, with other works of less importance, of which I then found myself possessed, supplied me with materials towards the execution of my plan. I had not, however, proceeded far, before I perceived that the subject deserved a more minute inquiry; for which purpose it would be necessary to resort to contemporary authorities, and, if possible, to original documents: The impracticability of obtaining in this country the information of which I stood in need, would perhaps have damped the ardour of my undertaking, had not a circumstance presented itself in the highest degree favourable

vourable to my purpose. An intimate friend, with whom I had been many years united in studies and affection, had paid a visit to Italy, and had fixed his winter residence at Florence. I well knew that I had only to request his assistance, in order to obtain whatever information he had an opportunity of procuring, from the very spot which was to be the scene of my intended history. My inquiries were particularly directed towards the Laurentian and Riccardi libraries, which I was convinced would afford much original and interesting information. It would be unjust merely to say that my friend afforded me the assistance I required; he went far beyond even the hopes I had formed, and his return to his native country was, if possible, rendered still more grateful to me, by the materials he had collected for my use. Amongst these I had the pleasure to find several beautiful poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, the originals of which are deposited in the Laurentian library, although the former editors of his works appear not to have had the slightest information respecting them. These poems, which have been copied with great accu-

racy, and, where it was possible, collated with different manuscripts, will for the first time be given to the publick in the third volume. The munificence of the late Great Duke Leopold, and the liberality of the Marquis Riccardi, had laid open the inestimable treasures of their collections to every inquirer; and under the regulations of the venerable Canonico Bandini, to whose labours the literary history of Italy is highly indebted, such arrangements have been adopted in the Laurentian library, that every difficulty which might retard research is effectually removed. Unlike the immense but ill-digested and almost prohibited collections of the Vatican, the libraries of Florence are the common property of the learned of all nations; and an institution founded by Cosmo, and promoted by Lorenzo de' Medici, yet subsists, the noblest monument of their glory, the most authentick depository of their fame.

Amongst a number of printed volumes, immediately or remotely connected with my principal subject, which were supplied by the attention of my friend, were two works

works of which he had given me previous information. These were the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, written in Latin by Monsignor Fabroni, a learned Italian prelate, and published in the year 1784, in two volumes in quarto; and the life of his grandfather Cosmo, by the same author, published in one volume in quarto in the year 1789. On receiving these extensive productions, it became a subject of consideration, whether it might not be advisable to lay aside my own narrative, although it was then far advanced, and satisfy myself with a translation of the former of these works, adding such remarks as my previous researches had enabled me to make. The perusal of these volumes, whilst it afforded considerable gratification, soon however convinced me that the purpose I had in view could not be obtained by a translation. The leading object of Fabroni is to illustrate the political, rather than the literary life of Lorenzo. It appeared to me, that the mere historical events of the fifteenth century, so far as they regarded Italy, could not deeply interest my countrymen in the eighteenth; but I conceived that

that the progress of letters and of arts would be attended to with pleasure in every country where they were cultivated and protected: many other motives, some of which will appear in the course of the work, determined me to prosecute my original plan: and the history now presented to the publick bears no more resemblance to that of Fabroni, than his does to that of his predecessor Valori. The general incidents in the life of Lorenzo are indeed nearly the same in all; but for most of the sentiments and observations that may occur in the ensuing volume, and for a considerable part of the narrative, particularly such as relates to the state and progress of letters and of arts, the responsibility must fall on myself.

But although I have not thought it eligible to rest satisfied with a mere translation of the works of Fabroni, I have derived from them very important assistance and information. The numerous and authentick documents which he obtained by diligent researches through the archives of Florence, and which occupy two thirds of his

his work, are a treasure with which, in the infancy of my undertaking, I little expected to be gratified. The assistance derived from these sources did not, however, supersede my exertions in procuring such additional information as other parts of the continent and this country could supply. The Crevenna library, lately exposed to sale at Amsterdam, and the Pinelli in London, furnished me with several publications of early date, for which I might otherwise long have inquired throughout Europe to no purpose. The rich and extensive catalogues published by Edwards, Payne, and other London booksellers, who have of late years diligently sought for and imported into England whatever is curious or valuable in foreign literature, have also contributed to the success of my inquiries; and I may justly say, that I have spared neither trouble nor expense in the acquisition of whatever appeared to be necessary to the prosecution of my work.

I am not, however, arrogant enough to conceive that, even with these advantages, I have been able to do justice to so extensive and so diversified a subject. Precluded

cluded by more serious and indispensable avocations from devoting a continued attention to it, I am apprehensive that facts of importance may either have escaped my diligence, or may be yet imperfectly related. The difficulties attending a critical examination of works of taste, written in a foreign language, contribute to render me diffident of the success of my labours. In the few attempts to translate or imitate the poetical pieces of Lorenzo and his contemporaries, I must regret my inability to do them more complete justice; an inability of which I am fully sensible, but for which I do not mean to trouble my reader with any further apology. Such as it is, I submit this performance to the judgment of the publick: ready to acknowledge, though not pleased to reflect, that the disadvantages under which an author labours are no excuse for the imperfections of his work.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN the first of these volumes was nearly printed, and the materials arranged for the second, I had the satisfaction of obtaining a copy of a very singular and interesting work, in three volumes octavo, entitled *Mémoires Généalogiques de la Maison de Médici*. For this performance I am indebted to the MARQUIS OF LANSDOWN; a nobleman who has conferred the most important benefits on his country, and whose attention has been invariably directed to the encouragement of those studies which can only produce their proper fruits in that state of publick tranquillity, which his distinguished talents have been uniformly exerted to secure.

The work above mentioned is the production of Mr. Tenhove of the Hague, a near relation of the late Greffier of the states of Holland, Mr. Fagel, to whose memory it is inscribed in the following affectionate terms:

A l' heu-

A l' heureuse mémoire de François Fagel,
Greffier de leurs hautes puissances les Etats Generaux
des Provinces-unies:
Heritier des vertus et des talens de ses ancetres,
Collegue et ami du venerable vieillard son pere,
Favori des peuples et des grands,
Fragile espoir de la patrie,
Ami zelé des lettres et des arts,
Arbitre sur de l' elegance et du gout,
Et meilleure moitié de moi-meme.

But, alas! the monument which affection had devoted to the memory of a friend, was itself destined to remain unfinished; and the accomplished author, by a fatality which will perhaps remind my readers of the events related in the last chapter of this history, whilst he lamented the loss of his patron, was called to join him, in the society of the wise, the learned, and the good of former ages—in that of Scipio and of Lælius, of Politiano and of Lorenzo de' Medici.

Inter odoratum Lauri nemus, unde superne
Plurimus Eridani per silvam volvitur amnis.

Of such part of his work as was printed before his death, a copy had been presented by him to the learned and venerable Dr. Macleane of the Hague, the well-known translator of Mosheim's

Mosheim's ecclesiastical history, with whom he had lived for many years in the most friendly intimacy. At the kind request of the Marquis of Lansdown, Dr. Macleane transmitted these volumes to England; and a probability having since occurred, of his obtaining another copy, he has obligingly relinquished them to his Lordship, by whose liberality I have now the pleasure of calling them my own.

Although these volumes appear to be rather the amusement of the leisure hours of a polite scholar, than the researches of a professed historian, yet they display an acquaintance with the transactions of Italy, seldom acquired except by a native. To a great proficiency in the literature of that country, Mr. Tenhove united an indisputable taste in the productions of all the fine arts, and a general knowledge of the state of manners, and the progress of science, in every period of society. The fertility of his genius, and the extent of his information, have enabled him to intersperse his narrative with a variety of interesting digressions, and brilliant observations; and the most engaging work that has perhaps ever appeared, on a subject of literary history, is written by a native of one country, in the language of another, on the affairs of a third.

Excellent, however, as the work of Mr. Tenhove certainly is, I have not derived from it any very important assistance; which will be more readily credited, when it is understood that it commences with the history of the family of the Medici in remote antiquity, and adverting to every member of it, of whom any historical notices remain, was intended to be continued down to the present century. The interval of time which I have undertaken to illustrate, extending only to the life of an individual who died at an early age, must consequently form a small portion in a work intended to embrace such an extent of time, yet not upon the whole more voluminous than my own. The character of Lorenzo is indeed finely conceived, and faithfully drawn by Mr. Tenhove; and his accomplishments are celebrated with a warmth of expression, which proves that the author was fully sensible of his genius and his merits. But it was not consistent with the plan that he had adopted, to enter into those particular inquiries, and more minute discussions, which the duty of a professed biographer requires. From this circumstance, and the advanced state of my work, I was not induced to make any alteration either in its arrangement or in the manner of its execution. After having proceeded so far in the character of a simple relater of facts, it would

would indeed ill become me to aim at the higher ornaments of composition.

Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit.

Unwilling, however, to possess such a treasure as the volumes in question, without enabling my readers to share it with me in some degree, I have frequently taken occasion in the notes to the second volume, to cite the sentiments of Mr. Tenhove, on the subject of our mutual inquiry. I am aware, that by this conduct I am inducing a comparison by no means favourable to my own performance; but having executed it to the best of my ability, I have not been led by that consideration to suppress any thing which I thought might tend to authenticate or illustrate my work. The motives which have encouraged me to persevere in this undertaking, amidst numerous avocations and duties, which connect me with society by almost every tie, have been a high admiration of the character of Lorenzo de' Medici, the singular pleasure which I have enjoyed in tracing his history, and the earnest desire which I feel, to place him in that rank in the estimation of my countrymen, to which he is so eminently entitled.

CHAP. I.

ORIGIN of Florence—Government—Family of the Medici—Salvestro de' Medici—Giovanni de' Medici—Cosmo de' Medici—Influence of that family in Florence—Cosmo seized and imprisoned—Is banished to Padua—Allowed to reside at Venice—Ambrogio Traversari—Cosmo is recalled from banishment—Encourages men of learning—Leonardo and Carlo Aretino—Researches after the writings of the ancients—Poggio Bracciolini—Guarino Veronese—Giovanni Aurispa—Francesco—Filelfo—Council of Florence—Revival of the Platonick Philosophy—Marsilio Ficino—Cosmo establishes the Laurentian Library—Niccolo Niccoli founds the Library of S. Marco—The Vatican Library founded by Pope Nicholas V.*—Invention and progress of the art of printing—Capture of Constantinople by the Turks—Cosmo applies himself to study—Marriage of Piero de' Medici—Birth of Lorenzo and Giuliano—Celebrity of Cosmo—Antonio Beccatelli—Literary Quarrels—Bessarion and George of Trebisond—Poggio and Filelfo—Death and character of Cosmo de' Medici.*

CHAP. I.

FLORENCE has been remarkable in modern history for the frequency and violence of its internal dissentions, and for the predilection of its inhabitants for every species of science, and every production of art. However discordant these characteristicks may appear, they are not difficult to reconcile: The same active spirit that calls forth the talents of individuals for the preservation of their liberties, and resists with unconquerable resolution whatever is supposed to infringe them, in the moments of domestick peace and security seeks with avidity other objects of employment. The defence of freedom has always been found to expand and strengthen the mind; and though the faculties of the human race

CHAP. I. race may remain torpid for generations, when once roused into action they cannot speedily be lulled again into inactivity and repose.

Origin of Florence.

Of the rise of Florence, little can be traced with certainty, although much research has been employed on the subject. If we give credit to its historian Machiavelli[a], it derives its origin from the ancient and venerable city of Fiesole, whose walls yet remain at the distance of about three miles from Florence. The situation of Fiesole, on the summit of a steep hill, induced its inhabitants, many of whom were early devoted to commerce, to erect habitations for the convenience of traffick on the plain below, between the river Arno and the foot of the mountain. During the continuance of the Roman republick, this infant establishment was reenforced by colonists from Rome. The popular tradition of the place, countenanced by Landino[b] and Verini,

[a] *Mac. Istoria Fiorentina, lib.* ii.

[b] "Sed Florentinæ canerem primordia gentis;
"Nobile Syllanum tempus in omne genus:
"Syllanum genus Romana stirpe colonos
"A patribus nunquam degenerasse suis."
Landinus de laudibus Cosmi,
ap. Bandinii Specimen Literaturæ Florentinæ,
vol. i. *p.* 102.

"Syllanus

Verini[c], refers this event to the times of the dictatorship of Sylla, whilst Politiano places it under the triumvirate of Octavius, Antonius, and Lepidus[d]. CHAP. I.

In the frequent irruptions of the northern nations that subverted the Roman state, Florence followed the fate of the rest of Italy; but about the year 1010 it had acquired some degree of strength and independence, which was first exerted in attacking and demolishing the place

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" Syllanus primus fugiens asperrima montis
" Purgavit nostros arte colonus agros;
" Atque Arnum recta, contractis undique lymphis,
" Obice disrupto compulit ire via."

Land. de primordiis urbis.
Ibid. v. i. *p.* 167.

c " Felici Comites Syllæ de marmore templum,
" Mavorti posuere suo."

Ugolinus Verinus de illustratione Urbis Florentiæ.
Flor. 1636, *lib.* i. *p.* 9.

d " Deduxere igitur Florentiam coloniam triumviri " Cajus Cæsar qui deinde Augustus, Marcus Antonius, " et Marcus Lepidus etiam pontifex maximus." For many curious observations and learned conjectures on the origin of Fiesole and Florence, *v. Politiani Ep. lib.* i. *Ep.* 2.

CHAP. I. place from which it sprung[e]. Fiesole retains few traces of its former importance; but its delightful situation and pure air still render it an agreeable and healthy residence.

Government. For some centuries previous to the commencement of the present history, the government of Florence had fluctuated between an aristocratick and a popular form. The discord and animosity that arose from this instability may well be conceived. When either of the contending factions had obtained the ascendency, the leaders of it soon disagreed in the exercise of their power; and the weaker party, attaching themselves to the body of the people, speedily effected a revolution. The frequency of electing their magistrates, at the same time that it was favourable to the preservation of their liberties, fomented a continual spirit of opposition and resent-

[e] "Ast ubi Syllanos felix concordia cives
"Altius evexit, Fesulæ venere redactæ
"Sub juga, tunc populi crevit numerosa propago.
"Urbs inimica, potens, vicinaque mœnibus olim
"Martigenæ, ulterius fines efferre negabat.
"Ac veluti quondam veteres auxere Sabini
"Sub Tatio Romam: sic urbs Fesulana relicto
"Vertice victricem tandem migravit in urbem."
Verinus de illustr. Urbis Flor. lib. i.

resentment. A secret enmity, even in the most tranquil days of the republick, subsisted among the leaders of the different factions, and the slightest circumstance, whether of a foreign or domestick nature, was sufficient to kindle the latent spark into an open flame. The contests between the *Ghibellini* and the *Guelfi*[f], and between the *Bianchi* and the *Neri*[g], were entered

[f] This distinction began about the twelfth century. In the dissentions between the pope and the emperour, the partizans of the former were denominated Guelphs, and those of the Imperial faction Ghibelines; but in succeeding times these appellations conveyed other ideas, and the name of Guelphs was applied to those who, in any popular commotion, espoused the cause of the people, whilst that of Ghibelines became synonymous to the *optimates* of the Romans, or Aristocrates. Ammirato, without being able to trace the origin, pathetically laments the unhappy consequences of these distinctions to his country. *Istoria Fiorentina*, v. i. *p.* 55. 132. But the particular circumstances which introduced them into Florence are related at considerable length by Nerli. *Commentarii de' fatte civili di Firenze. Augs.* 1728. *p.* 2. *&c.*

[g] For these factions Italy was indebted to the city of Pistoia, where a disagreement took place between two young men of the family of Cancellieri, one of whom is called by Machiavelli, Geri, and the other, Lore. In this contest Geri received a slight blow from his relation, who immediately afterwards, at the command of his father

CHAP. I. tered into by the Florentines with an eagerness beyond that of any other people in Europe. For a great length of time Florence was at continual war with itself; and a number of citizens under the name of *Fuorusciti*, or refugees, were constantly employed in attempting to regain their native residence, for which purpose they scrupled not, by all possible means, to excite the resentment of other powers against it. If their attempts proved successful, the weaker party left

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father Gulielmo, went to the house of Bertuccio, the father of Geri, to apologize for the offence. Bertuccio, exasperated at the indignity, seized the young man, and with the assistance of two of his servants, cruelly cut off his hand on a manger. This atrocious deed roused the resentment of Gulielmo, who took up arms to revenge the injury. Cancellieri the common ancestor of the family had two wives, from one of whom descended the line of Gulielmo, from the other that of Bertuccio. One of these wives was named Bianca, whence that branch of their family and their adherents were named *Bianchi*, and their opponents, by way of distinction, obtained the name of *Neri*. The whole city espoused the part of one or other of these factions, and the contagion soon spread to Florence, where it received fresh vigour from the ancient dissentions of the *Cerchi* and the *Donati*. The quarrel shortly became tinctured with political enmity, and the Bianchi were considered as Ghibelines, the Neri as Guelphs. *Mac. Ist. Fior. lib.* ii. *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* i. *p.* 204.

left the city, till they in their turn could expel their conquerors. CHAP. I.

These disadvantages were however amply compensated by the great degree of freedom enjoyed by the citizens of Florence, which had the most favourable effects on their character, and gave them a decided superiority over the inhabitants of the rest of Italy. The popular nature of the government, not subjected to the will of an individual, as in many of the surrounding states, nor restricted, like that of Venice, to a particular class, was a constant incitement to exertion. Nor was it only on the great body of the people that the good effects of this system were apparent; even those who claimed the privileges of ancestry felt the advantages of a rivalship, which prevented their sinking into indolence, and called upon them to support by their own talents the rank and influence which they had derived from those of their ancestors. Where the business of government is confined to a few, the faculties of the many become torpid for want of exercise; but in Florence, every citizen was conversant with, and might hope, at least, to partake in the government; and hence was derived that spirit of industry, which in the pursuit of wealth, and the extension of commerce, was, amidst all their intestine

CHAP. I. intestine broils, so conspicuous, and so successful[h]. The fatigues of publick life, and the cares of mercantile avocations, were alleviated at times by the study of literature or the speculations of philosophy. A rational and dignified employment engaged those moments of leisure not necessarily devoted to more important concerns, and the mind was relaxed without being debilitated, and amused without being depraved. The superiority which the Florentines thus acquired was universally acknowledged, and they became the historians, the poets, the orators, and the preceptors of Europe.

The

[h] The beneficial effects of their government were not unobserved by the Florentines, and are well adverted to by Verini.

———Semperque aliquid novitatis in urbe est
Stat tamen incolumis majestas publica; causa est
Præclaris quoniam ingeniis Florentia favet,
Festinosque libens virtuti impendit honores.
Ex quo si linguæ vitæque industria major
Concessa est cuiquam, nostram demigrat in urbem;
Ut magis eniteat virtus ubi præmia prompta:
Æquarique sibi fert ægre prisca colonos
Nobilitas, oriturque trucis discordia belli;
Fitque minor census, patrimoniaque hausta tributis,
Reddunt attonitum qui stemmate fulget avito.
Contra autem solers et cedere nescius, instat
Fortunæ, summosque animo molitur honores.

Ver. de illust. Urb. lib. iii.

CHAP. I.

Family of Medici.

The family of the *Medici* had for many ages been esteemed one of the most considerable in the republick; nor have there been wanting authors who have derived its eminence from the age of Charlemagne: but it must be remembered, that these genealogies have been the production of subsequent times, when the elevation of this family to the supreme command in Florence, made it necessary to impress on the minds of the people an idea of its antiquity and respectability[i]. It appears however from authentick

[i] In a *MS.* of the Riccardi library at Florence, of which I have obtained an ample extract, entitled "*Origine e descendenza della casa de' Medici*," the origin of the family greatness is romantically referred to Averardo de' Medici, a commander under Charlemagne, who, for his valour in destroying the gigantick plunderer *Mugello*, by whom the surrounding country was laid waste, was honoured with the privilege of bearing for his arms six *palle*, or balls, as characteristick of the iron balls that hung from the mace of his fierce antagonist, the impression of which remained on his shield. Verini had before this accounted for the family name and arms by another hereditary tale.

Est qui Bebryaca Medices testetur ab urbe
Venisse; et Toscam sobolem delesse superbam
Asserat: hinc Medicis meruit cognomen habere
Quod Medicus Tosci fuerit, sic ore venenum
Dixerunt patrio: factique insignia portet
Senis in globulis flaventem sanguine peltam.

Ver. de illust. Urbis, lib. iii.

It

CHAP. I.

tick monuments, that many individuals of this family had signalized themselves on important occasions. Giovanni de' Medici[k] in the year 1251, with a body of only one hundred Florentines, forced his way through the Milanese army, then besieging the fortress of Scarperia, and entered the place with the loss of twenty lives.

Salvestro de' Medici.

Salvestro de' Medici acquired great reputation by his temperate, but firm resistance of the tyranny of the nobles[l], who, in order to secure their power, accused those who opposed them of being attached to the party of the Ghibelines, then in great odium at Florence. The persons so accused were said to be admonished, *ammoniti*, and by that act were excluded from all offices of government. This custom was at length carried to such an extreme, as to become insufferable. In the year 1379, Salvestro, being chosen

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It required some ingenuity to invalidate so strong a presumption of the ancient family profession, as arises from the name of *Medici* and the six pills borne as their device.

[k] *Amm. Ist. Fior.* i. 531.

[l] *Razzi vita di Salvestro de' Medici. Flor.* 1580. *Amm. Ist. Fior.* ii. 716, 717.

chosen chief magistrate, exerted his power in reforming this abuse; which was not however effected without a violent commotion, in which several of the nobility lost their lives. After the death of Salvestro, his son, Veri de' Medici, continued to hold a high rank in the republick, and, like the rest of this family, was always in great favour with the populace. CHAP. I.

The person, however, who may be said to have laid the foundation of that greatness which his posterity enjoyed for several ages, was Giovanni de' Medici, the great grandfather of Lorenzo, the subject of our present history[m]. By a strict attention to commerce, he acquired immense wealth; by his affability, moderation, and liberality, he ensured the confidence and esteem of his fellow-citizens. Without seeking after the offices of the republick, he was honoured with them all. The maxims, which, uniformly pursued, raised the house of Medici to the splendour Giovanni de' Medici.

[m] Giovanni nacque nel 1360, ebbe per moglie Piccarda di Nannino di Odoardo Bueri nel 1386. Fu principe nella republica Fiorentina, Ambasciatore al Papa, a Ladislao, e a Venegia. Morì il dì 20 di Febrajo del 1428. *Origine e descendenza, MS.*

CHAP. I. splendour which it afterwards enjoyed, are to be found in the charge given by this venerable old man on his death-bed to his two sons, Cosmo and Lorenzo[n]; "*I feel,*" said he, "*that I have lived the time prescribed me. I die content; leaving you, my sons, in affluence and in health, and in such a station, that whilst you follow my example, you may live in your native place, honoured and respected. Nothing affords me more pleasure, than the reflection that my conduct has not given offence to any one; but that, on the contrary, I have endeavoured to serve all persons to the best of my abilities. I advise you to do the same. With respect to the honours of the state, if you would live with security, accept only such as are bestowed on you by the laws, and the favour of your fellow-citizens; for it is the exercise of that power which is obtained by violence, and not of that which is voluntarily given, that occasions hatred and contention.*" He died in the year 1428, leaving two sons, Cosmo, born in the year 1389, and Lorenzo in 1394[o], from the latter of whom is derived the collateral branch of the family, that in the beginning of the

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[n] *Mac. Ist. Fior. lib.* v. [o] *Origine e descendenza, M.S.*

the sixteenth century obtained the absolute sovereignty of Tuscany[p]. CHAP. I.

Even in the life-time of his father, Cosmo had engaged himself deeply, not only in the extensive commerce by which the family had acquired its wealth, but in the weightier concerns of government. Such was his authority and reputation, that in the year 1414, when Balthasar Cosmo de' Medici. 1414.

[p] At the instance of the two brothers, Donatello the sculptor erected a monument to the memory of their father Giovanni de' Medici, and their mother Picarda, which yet remains in the church of S. Lorenzo at Florence; on one side of which is the following inscription:

" Si merita in patriam, si gloria, sanguis, et omni
" Larga manus, nigra libera morte forent,
" Viveret heu! patriæ casta cum conjuge felix,
" Auxilium miseris, portus et aura suis,
" Omnia sed quando superantur morte, *Johannes*
" Hoc mausoleo, tuque *Picarda*, jaces:
" Ergo senex mœret, juvenis, puer, omnis et ætas,
" Orba parente suo patria mœsta gemit."

On the other side:

" Cosmus et Laurentius de' Medicis, Viro clarissimo,
" Johanni Averardi filio et Piccardæ Adovardi filiæ carissimis parentibus hoc sepulcrum faciendum curarunt.
" Obiit autem Johannes x. Kal. Martii. MCCCCXXVIII.
" Piccarda vero XIII. Kal. Maii quinquennio post e vita
" migravit."

CHAP. I. Balthasar Cossa, who had been elected pope, and had assumed the name of John XXIII. was summoned to attend the council of Constance, he chose to be accompanied by Cosmo de' Medici, amongst other men of eminence, whose characters might countenance his cause. By this council, which continued nearly four years, Balthasar was deprived of his pontifical dignity, and Otto Colonna, who took the name of Martin V. was elected pope. Divested of his authority, and pursued by his numerous adversaries, Balthasar endeavoured to save himself by flight. Cosmo did not desert in adversity the man to whom he had attached himself in prosperity. At the expense of a large sum of money, he redeemed him from the hands of the duke of Bavaria, who had seized upon his person; and afterwards gave him an hospitable shelter at Florence during the remainder of his life. Nor did the successful pontiff resent the kindness shewn to his rival; on the contrary, he soon afterwards paid a publick visit to Florence, where, on the formal submission of Balthasar, and at the request of the Medici, he created him a cardinal, with the privilege of taking the first place in the sacred college. The new-made cardinal did not long survive this honour. He died in the year 1419,

1419[q], and it was supposed, that the Medici at his death possessed themselves of immense riches, which he had acquired during his pontificate[r]. This notion was afterwards encouraged, for malevolent purposes, by those who well knew its falsehood[s]. The true source of the wealth of the Medici, was their superiour talents and application to commerce. The property of

CHAP. I.

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[q] *Amm. Ist. Fior.* 2, 985.

[r] "Si crede che Cosmo de' Medici, del danaro di Bal- "dassarre accrescesse in modo le sue facoltà che fù poi "tenuto il più ricco cittadino di Fiorenza, anzi che in "Italia, e fuori d'Italia fosse." *Platina in vita di Martino* V. But this tale is confuted by Ammirato, who has cited the testament of Balthasar, by which it appears that he was doubtful whether his property would extend to pay the legacies he had bequeathed. To the altar of St. John the Baptist, he gave a *finger of that saint*, which he had long carried secretly about his person. *Amm. Ist. Fior.* 2. 1047.

[s] The malice and virulence of Filelfo led him to accuse the Medici of having poisoned Balthasar, in order to obtain possession of his property; but this is sufficiently refuted by the slightest acquaintance with the characters of the accuser and the accused, to say nothing of the irrefragable testimony of Balthasar's will above referred to, of which Giovanni de' Medici was one of the trustees.

CHAP. I. of the cardinal was scarcely sufficient to discharge his legacies and his debts.

After the death of Giovanni de' Medici, Cosmo supported and increased the family dignity. His conduct was uniformly marked by urbanity and kindness to the superiour ranks of his fellow-citizens, and by a constant attention to the interests and the wants of the lower class, whom he relieved with unbounded generosity. By these means he acquired numerous and zealous partisans, of every denomination; but he considered them rather as pledges for the continuance of the power he possessed, than as instruments to be employed in extending it to the ruin and subjugation of the state. "*No "family*," says Voltaire "*ever obtained its "power by so just a title*[t]."

Influence of the Medici in Florence.

The authority which Cosmo and his descendants exercised in Florence during the fifteenth century, was of a very peculiar nature; and consisted rather in a tacit influence on their part, and a voluntary acquiescence on that of the people, than in any prescribed or definite compact between them. The form of government

[t] *Essai sur les Mœurs, &c. vol.* ii. *p.* 282. 4*to. ed. Gen.*

ment was ostensibly a republick, and was directed by a council of ten citizens, and a chief executive officer called the *Gonfaloniere*, or standardbearer, who was chosen every two months. Under this establishment the citizens imagined they enjoyed the full exercise of their liberties; but such was the power of the Medici, that they generally either assumed to themselves the first offices of the state, or nominated such persons as they thought proper to those employments. In this, however, they paid great respect to popular opinion. That opposition of interests so generally apparent between the people and their rulers, was at this time scarcely perceived at Florence, where superiour qualifications and industry were the surest recommendations to publick authority and favour. Convinced of the benefits constantly received from this family, and satisfied that they could at any time withdraw themselves from a connection that exacted no engagements, and required only a temporary acquiescence, the Florentines considered the Medici as the fathers, and not as the rulers of the republick. On the other hand, the chiefs of this house, by appearing rather to decline than to court the honours bestowed on them, and by a singular moderation in the use of them when obtained, were careful to maintain the character of simple citizens of Florence, and

servants

CHAP. I. servants of the state. An interchange of reciprocal good offices was the only tie by which the Florentines and the Medici were bound, and perhaps the long continuance of this connection may be attributed to the very circumstance of its being in the power of either of the parties, at any time, to have dissolved it.

Cosmo seized and imprisoned.

But the prudence and moderation of Cosmo, though they soothed the jealous apprehensions of the Florentines, could not at all times repress the ambitious designs of those who wished to possess or to share his authority. In the year 1433[u] Rinaldo de' Albizi, at the head of a powerful party, carried the appointment of the magistracy. At that time Cosmo had withdrawn to his seat at Mugello, where he had remained some months, in order to avoid the disturbances that he saw were likely to ensue[v]; but

1433.

[u] *Amm. Ist. Fior.* 2. 1088.

[v] For some time before the close of the 14th century, it became a custom amongst the chiefs of this family, to keep private memorials of the circumstances attending it. These memorials, or Ricordi, were begun by Filigno de' Medici, who in the year 1373 entered, in a book yet extant, and entitled "*Notizie della famiglia de' Medici*," some information respecting its wealth, population, and respectability. (*Appendix*, No. I.) Cosmo continued the

but at the request of his friends he returned to Florence, where he was led to expect that an union of the different parties would be effected, so as to preserve the peace of the city. In this expectation he was however disappointed. No sooner did he make his appearance in the palace, where his presence had been requested, on pretence of his being intended to share in the administration of the republick, than he was seized upon by his adversaries, and committed to the custody of Federigo Malavolti. He remained in this situation for several days, in constant apprehension of some violence being offered to his person; but he still more dreaded that the malice of his enemies might attempt his life by poison. During four days, a small portion of bread was the only food which he thought proper to take. CHAP. I.

The generosity of his keeper at length relieved him from this state of anxiety. In order to Is banished to Padua.

the practice, and in particular has left a very minute account of the circumstances attending his banishment and return, which greatly differs in many respects from the narrative of Machiavelli. (*Appendix*, No. II.) The Ricordi of Lorenzo also remain, and afford much indisputable information on the principal events of his life.

CHAP. I. to induce him to take his food with confidence, Malavolti partook of it with him[w]. In the mean time, his brother Lorenzo, and his cousin Averardo, having raised a considerable body of men from Romagna and other neighbouring parts, and being joined by Niccolo Tolentino, the commander of the troops of the republick, approached towards Florence to his relief; but the apprehensions that in case they resorted to open violence, the life of Cosmo might be endangered, induced them to abandon their enterprise. At length Rinaldo and his adherents obtained a decree of the magistracy against the Medici and their friends, by which Cosmo was banished to Padua for ten years, Lorenzo to Venice for five years, and several of their relations and adherents were involved in a similar punish-

[w] The address of Malavolti to Cosmo on this occasion, as related by Machiavelli, is full of kindness and humanity. "Tu dubiti Cosimo di non essere avvelenato, e "fai te morire di fame; é poco honore a me, credendo "ch'io volessi tener le mani a una simile sceleratezza. "Io non credi che tu habbi a perdere la vita, tanti amici "hai in palagio, e fuori; ma quando pure avessi a per"derla, vivi sicuro che pigliaranno altri modi che usar "me, per ministro a tortela: perche io non voglio bru"tarmi le mani nel sangue d'alcuno, e massime del suo "che non mi offendesti mai," &c.

Mac. Ist. Fior. lib. iv.

punishment. Cosmo would gladly have left the city pursuant to his sentence, but his enemies thought it more advisable to retain him till they had established their authority; and they frequently gave him to understand, that if his friends raised any opposition to their measures, his life should answer it. He also suspected that another reason for his detention was to ruin him in his credit and circumstances; his mercantile concerns being then greatly extended. As soon as these disturbances were known, several of the states of Italy interfered in his behalf. Three ambassadours arrived from Venice, who proposed to take him under their protection, and to engage that he should strictly submit to the sentence imposed on him. The Marquis of Ferrara also gave a similar proof of his attachment. Though their interposition was not immediately successful, it was of great importance to Cosmo, and secured him from the attempts of those who aimed at his life. After a confinement of near a month, some of his friends, finding in his adversaries a disposition to gentler measures, took occasion to forward his cause by the timely application of a sum of money to Bernardo Guadagni the Gonfaloniere, and to Mariotto Baldovinetti, two of the creatures of Rinaldo. This measure was successful. He was privately taken from his confinement by

CHAP. I. by night, and led out of Florence. For this piece of service Guadagni received one thousand florins, and Baldovinetti eight hundred. "*They were poor souls,*" says Cosmo in his Ricordi, "*for if money had been their object, they might have had ten thousand, or more, to have freed me from the perils of such a situation*[x]."

Is allowed to reside at Venice.

From Florence, Cosmo proceeded immediately towards Venice, and at every place through which he passed, experienced the most flattering attention, and the warmest expressions of regard. On his approach to that city he was met

[x] Machiavelli ascribes the liberation of Cosmo to the interference and assistance of Fargonaccio, a buffoon, who was admitted by Malavolti to visit Cosmo during his confinement, and was employed by him in negotiating with the chiefs of the opposite faction for his deliverance. Varillas has ornamented the same story, according to his manner, with an infinite number of particulars. To judge from his narrative, this author might not only have been a contemporary, but intrusted with the most secret transactions of the negotiation, and the confidant of the most private thoughts of the parties concerned. *Var. Mem. de Flor. p.* 9, &c. In the narrative that I have given I have thought proper to discard these dubious accounts, and to adhere to the authentick relation of Cosmo himself; who adverts to no such circumstance, but on the contrary expressly states by whose assistance the money was paid. *v. Ricordi di Cosmo in App.*

met by his brother Lorenzo, and many of his friends, and was received by the senate with such honours as are bestowed by that stately republick, only on persons of the highest quality and distinction. After a short stay there, he went to Padua, the place prescribed for his banishment; but on an application to the Florentine state, by Andrea Donato the Venetian ambassadour, he was permitted to reside on any part of the Venetian territories, but not to approach within the distance of one hundred and seventy miles from Florence. The affectionate reception which he had met with at Venice induced him to fix his abode there, until a change of circumstances should restore him to his native country. CHAP. I.

Amongst the several learned and ingenious men that accompanied Cosmo in his banishment, or resorted to him during his stay at Venice, was Michellozzo Michellozzi, a Florentine sculptor and architect, whom Cosmo employed in making models and drawings of the most remarkable buildings in Venice, and also in forming a library in the monastery of St. George[y], which he enriched with many valuable

[y] *Vasari Vite de' Pittori, vol.* i. *p.* 339. *Ed. Flor.* 1568.

CHAP. I. able manuscripts, and left as an honourable monument of his gratitude, to a place that had afforded him so kind an asylum in his adversity[z].

Ambrogio Traversari.

During his residence at Venice, Cosmo also received frequent visits from Ambrogio Traversari, a learned monk of Camaldoli near Florence[a], and afterwards superiour of the monastery at that

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[z] This library existed till the year 1614, when in consequence of the monastery being rebuilt, it was destroyed, and the books it contained are supposed to have perished. *Tiraboschi, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, vol.* vi. *parte* i. *p.* 102.

[a] Ambrogio was born in 1386, and was a native of Forli, but is usually ranked amongst the eminent men of Florence, where he was educated, and where he principally resided. "In Firenze bensì fu educato Ambrogio: "In Firenze vestì l'abito monacale: In Firenze riposano "le sue ossa; e però in tal qual modo può Fiorentino "appellarsi." *Zeno, Dissertazioni Vossiane, vol.* i. *p.* 75. So complete was his knowledge of the Greek language, that in the council of Florence he acted as interpreter between the Italians and the Greeks. His translation of Diogenes Laertius, inscribed by him to Cosmo de' Medici, and first printed at Venice, by Nicolas Jenson, in 1475, has been several times reprinted. Traversari has had the good fortune to meet with a biographer and annotator in the learned Mehus, who has done justice to the subject, and made his life and writings the vehicle of

that place. Though chiefly confined within the limits of a cloister, Traversari had, perhaps, the best pretensions to the character of a polite scholar of any man of that age. From the letters of Traversari, now extant, we learn that Cosmo and his brother not only bore their misfortunes with firmness, but continued to express on every occasion an inviolable attachment to their native place[b]. CHAP. I.

The readiness with which Cosmo had given way to the temporary clamour raised against him, and the reluctance he had shewn to renew those bloody rencounters that had so often disgraced the streets of Florence, gained him new friends. The utmost exertions of his antagonists could not long prevent the choice of such magistrates as were known to be attached to the cause of the Medici; and no sooner did they enter

Cosmo is recalled from banishment.

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of much curious and useful information. It is only to be regretted that this extensive and valuable work is not better arranged. *Amb. Traversarii Lat. Epi.* &c. 2 *vol. fo. Flor.* 1759.

[b] "Cosmus et Laurentius, fratres, viri amicissimi, "valent optimè; magnaque constantia animi ferunt cala- "mitatem suam; et, quod his majus est, eo adfectu in "patriam sunt ut illam majore constantia quam antea "diligant," &c. *Trav. Epi. lib.* viii. 53.

CHAP. I. enter on the execution of their office, than Cosmo and his brother were recalled, and Rinaldo, with his adherents, were compelled to quit the city. This event took place about the expiration of twelve months from the time of Cosmo's banishment[c].

Encourages men of learning.

From this time the life of Cosmo de' Medici was an almost uninterrupted series of prosperity. The tranquillity enjoyed by the republick, and the satisfaction and peace of mind which he experienced in the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, enabled him to indulge his natural propensity to the promotion of science, and the encouragement of learned men. The study of the Greek language had been introduced into Italy, principally by the exertions of the celebrated

[c] The attachment of the populace to the Medici is strikingly described by Poggio. "Itaque indicta populi "concione, quanta alacritate, Dii boni, quanta exulta- "tione, quanto gaudio, quanto studio, etiam infirmorum "concursus est ad Palatium factus, omnium ætatum, "ordinum, nationum! Nemo non solum civem se, sed ne "hominem quidem arbitrabatur, qui non huic causæ "interesset, qui non manu, voce, vultus denique ac "gestus significatione faveret. Existimabant omnes non "de tua, sed de publica salute agi, non de privata unius "domo, sed de communi omnium causa certari."

Poggii Ep. 340. *Ed. Basil.* 1538.

brated Boccaccio[d], towards the latter part of the preceding century, but on the death of that great promoter of letters it again fell into neglect. After a short interval, another attempt was made to revive it by the intervention of Emanuel Chrysoloras, a noble Greek, who, during the interval of his important embassies, taught that language at Florence and other cities of Italy, about the beginning of the fifteenth century. His disciples were numerous and respectable. Amongst others of no inconsiderable note, were Ambrogio Traversari, Leonardo Bruni[e], Carlo Marsuppini,

CHAP. I.

Leonardo and Carlo Aretino.

[d] Boccaccio is not only entitled to the honour of having introduced into Italy the study of the Greek language, but of having preserved and restored what constitutes its greatest glory—The writings of Homer—Thus he boasts of his meritorious labours: "Fui equidem ipse "insuper, qui primus meis sumptibus Homeri libros, "et alios quosdam græcos in Hetruriam revocavi, ex qua "multis ante sæculis abierant, non redituri. Nec in "Hetruriam tantum sed in patriam deduxi."

Bocc. Genealogia Deorum, lib. xv. *cap.* 7. *Ed.* 1481.

[e] The life of this eminent scholar and promoter of science is prefixed to his *Epistolæ*, published by Mehus in 2 *vols.* 8*vo. Flor.* 1741.—Many particulars may also be found in the *Dissert. Voss. of Zeno.* He was born at Arezzo in 1370, "de honestis quidem sed non admodum "generosis parentibus." For several years he was one of the secretaries of the Roman court, but afterwards fixed

CHAP. I. pini[f], the two latter of whom were natives of Arezzo, whence they took the name of Aretino,

fixed his residence at Florence, where he held an office which had been long enjoyed only by men of the first character for learning and abilities, that of secretary to the republick. His history of Florence, written in Latin, was translated into Italian by Donato Acciajuoli, and published in Venice 1476. Flor. 1492. A considerable number of his works yet remain in MS. amongst which are many translations from the Greek. His Latin translation of the epistles of Plato is inscribed to Cosmo de' Medici, and as the dedication is illustrative of his character, and has not hitherto been printed, I shall give it in the Appendix, from a MS. copy of the fifteenth century. (*Appendix*, No. III.)

[f] Carlo Marsuppini the elder succeeded his countryman Leonardo Bruni in the office of secretary to the republick of Florence. Whilst he held this employment, a circumstance occurred in some degree unfavourable to his reputation as a scholar. On the emperour's arrival at Florence, it was the office of Carlo to address him in a Latin oration, which he required two days to prepare, and by which he obtained no small share of applause: but Eneas Sylvius, the secretary to the emperour, and who afterwards became Pope Pius the II. having replied in the name of the emperour, and made some requisitions to the Florentines that demanded an extempore answer, Carlo requested time to prepare himself, and could not be induced to proceed. The interview was therefore concluded by Gianozzo Manetti, who, by the specimen he gave of his talents on this occasion, rose to great reputation amongst his countrymen.

We

Aretino, Poggio Bracciolini, Guarino Veronese, and Francesco Filelfo, who, after the death of Chrysoloras, in 1415, strenuously vied with each other in the support of Grecian literature, and were successful enough to keep the flame alive till it received new aid from other learned Greeks, who were driven from Constantinople by the dread of the Turks, or by the total overthrow of the eastern empire. To these illustrious foreigners, as well as to those eminent Italians, who shortly became their successful rivals,

CHAP. I.

We need not hesitate in attributing this event rather to an untimely diffidence, than to any want of talents in Carlo, as may be judged, not only from the numerous suffrages of his countrymen, but from his own works, some of which yet survive, although few have undergone the press. He is however improperly placed by *Vossius* amongst the writers of history, as *Apostolo Zeno* has fully shewn. The numerous errours of the *Oltramontani* in treating on the Literati of Italy ought to operate as a perpetual caution to those who follow them in so hazardous a track. Of his poetry, the only piece that has been printed is a translation of the Batrachomyomachia of Homer, first published at Parma in 1492, and afterwards at Florence by Bernardo Zucchetti 1512, with this distich in the place of a title:

" Accipe Mæonio cantatas carmine ranas,
" Et frontem nugis solvere disce meis."

CHAP. I. rivals, even in the knowledge of their national history and language, Cosmo afforded the most liberal protection and support. Of this the numerous productions inscribed to his name, or devoted to his praise, are an ample testimony[g]. In some of these he is commended for his attachment to his country, his liberality to his friends, his benevolence to all. He is denominated the protector of the needy, the refuge of the oppressed, the constant patron and support of learned men. "*You have shewn*," says Poggio[h], "*such humanity and moderation in dispensing the gifts of fortune, that they seem to have been rather the reward of your virtues and merits, than conceded by her bounty. Devoted to the study of letters from your early years, you have by your example given additional splendour to science itself. Although involved in the weightier concerns of state, and unable to devote a great part of your time to books, yet you have found a constant satisfaction*

[g] To Cosmo de' Medici Argyropylus addressed his translation of several tracts of Aristotle; Lapo Castelli-onchio, his life of Themistocles from Plutarch; and Benedetto Accolti, his dialogue "de viris illustribus." A great number of other learned works, inscribed to Cosmo, remain in the Laurentian library, and are particularly cited in the catalogue of Bandini.

Flor. 1774, &c.

[h] *Poggii opera, p.* 312. *Ed. Basil.* 1538.

faction in the society of those learned men who have always frequented your house." In enumerating the men of eminence that distinguished the city of Florence, Flavio Blondo adverts in the first instance to Cosmo de' Medici[1]. "*A citizen, who, whilst he excels in wealth every other citizen of Europe, is rendered much more illustrious by his prudence, his humanity, his liberality, and what is more to our present purpose, by his knowledge of useful literature, and particularly of history.*"

Researches after the writings of the ancients.

That extreme avidity for the works of the ancient writers which distinguished the early part of the fifteenth century, announced the near approach of more enlightened times. Whatever were the causes that determined men of wealth and learning to exert themselves so strenuously in this pursuit, certain it is that their interference was of the highest importance to the interests of posterity; and that if it had been much longer delayed, the loss would have been in a great degree irreparable; such of the manuscripts as then existed, of the ancient Greek and Roman authors, being daily perishing in obscure corners, a prey to oblivion and neglect. It was therefore a circumstance productive

[1] *Ap. Tiraboschi, Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* vi. *p.* 1. *p.* 27.

CHAP. I. ductive of the happiest consequences, that the pursuits of the opulent were at this time directed rather towards the recovery of the works of the ancients, than to the encouragement of contemporary merit; a fact that may serve in some degree to account for the dearth of original literary productions during this interval. Induced by the rewards that invariably attended a successful inquiry, those men who possessed any considerable share of learning, devoted themselves to this occupation, and to such a degree of enthusiasm was it carried, that the discovery of an ancient manuscript was regarded as almost equivalent to the conquest of a kingdom.

The history of the vicissitudes which the writings of the ancients have experienced, is little less than the history of literature itself, which has flourished or declined in proportion as they have been esteemed or neglected. A full and accurate detail of these circumstances, whilst it would be highly interesting to the scholar, would discharge in some degree the debt of gratitude due to those who have devoted their labours and their fortunes to this important service. In relinquishing an inquiry too extensive for the nature of the present work, it may here be allowed to advert to such remains

remains of the ancient authors as were brought to light during the period in question, by the munificence of Cosmo de' Medici, and the industry of those who so earnestly seconded his endeavours. CHAP. I.

Of all the learned men of his time, Poggio[k] seems to have devoted himself the most particularly Poggio Bracciolini.

[k] This extraordinary man, whose writings throw considerable light on the history of the age, and whose Latin style pleases by its unaffected simplicity, was born in the year 1381, of the noble family of *Bracciolini*, originally of Florence, and having spent his youth in travelling through different countries of Europe, settled at length at Rome. He remained in this city as secretary in the service of *eight* successive popes, till he was invited to Florence in the year 1452, being then upwards of seventy years of age, to succeed Carlo Marsuppini as secretary to the republick. After his return to Florence he began to write the history of that state, but dying before he had brought it to a conclusion, it was afterwards completed by his unfortunate son Giacopo. His numerous works have been several times reprinted; the most general collection of them is that of *Basil*, 1538. Of all his productions his *Liber Facetiarum* is the most singular. The gross indecency of some of his tales can only be equalled by the freedom in which he indulges himself respecting the priesthood. It is difficult to conceive how he escaped in those times the resentment of that order; but we must remember that this work was produced in the bosom of the

CHAP. I. larly to this employment, and his exertions were crowned with ample success. The number of manuscripts discovered by him in different parts of Europe, during the space of near fifty years, will remain a lasting proof of his perseverance, and of his sagacity in these pursuits. Whilst he attended the council of Constance in the year 1415, he took an opportunity of visiting the convent of S. Gallo, distant from that city about twenty miles, where he had been informed

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the church, and was probably an amusement for the learned leisure of prelates and of cardinals. In a short preface Poggio explains the motives that led him to this composition, and attempts to excuse its licentiousness.

Although Poggio was an ecclesiastick, he had several children whom he openly acknowledged. His friend the cardinal of S. Angelo having remonstrated with him on the irregularity of his conduct, Poggio, in his reply, acknowledges his fault, but at the same time attempts to extinguish the glare of it in the general blaze of licentiousness that involved the age. His letter on this occasion affords a striking proof of the depravity of the times. (*Poggii, Hist. de varietate Fortunæ*, &c. *p.* 207. *Ed. Par.* 1723.) He afterwards devested himself of his clerical character, and married a young and handsome wife; in justification of which measure he thought it necessary to write a treatise, which he entitled "*An seni sit uxor ducenda*," and which he addressed to Cosmo de' Medici. This *important* dissertation yet remains, though it has not hitherto been printed. *Zeno, Diss. Voss.* i. 36, &c.

informed that it was probable he might find some manuscripts of the ancient Roman writers. In this place he had the happiness to discover a complete copy of Quintilian, whose works had before appeared only in a mutilated and imperfect state. At the same time he found the three first books, and part of the fourth, of the Argonautics of Valerius Flaccus. Some idea may be formed of the critical state of these works from the account that Poggio has left. Buried in the obscurity of a dark and lonely tower, covered with filth and rubbish, their destruction seemed inevitable[l]. Of this fortunate discovery he gave immediate notice to his friend Leonardo Aretino, who, by representing to him the importance and utility of his labours, stimulated him to fresh exertions. The letter addressed by Leonardo to Poggio on this occasion is full of the highest commendations, and the most extravagant expressions of joy[m]. By his subsequent researches through France and Germany,

CHAP. I.

[l] "Non in bibliothecâ ut eorum dignitas postulabat, "sed in teterrimo quodam et obscuro carcere, fundo "scilicet unius turris, quo ne vitâ quidem damnati detru- "derentur. *Pog. ap. Zeno, Diss. Voss.* i. 44.

[m] *Leonardi Bruni Ep. lib.* iv. *Ep.*5.

CHAP. I. Germany, Poggio also recovered several of the orations of Cicero[n]. At that time only eight of the comedies of Plautus were known. The first complete copy of that author was brought to Rome at the instance of Poggio, by Nicholas of Treves, a German monk, from whom it was purchased by the cardinal Giordano Orsini, who was afterwards with great difficulty prevailed upon to suffer Poggio and his friends to copy it; and even this favour would not have been granted without the warm interference of Lorenzo, the brother of Cosmo de' Medici. The monk had flattered the Italian scholars that he also possessed a copy of the work of Aulus Gellius, and of the first book of Quintus Curtius; but in this they were disappointed[o]. From a Latin elegy by Christoforo Landino, on the death of Poggio, we are fully authorised to conclude, that he also first discovered the beautiful and philosophick poem of Lucretius, that of Silius Italicus, and the valuable work of Columella[p]: and from a memorial yet existing in the

[n] *Trav. Ep. v.* i. *præf. p.* 36.

[o] *Trav. Ep. v.* i. *præf. p.* 40. 41. 43.

[p] "Quin etiam, ut veterum erueret monimenta virorum,
"Nec sineret turpem tot bona ferre situm,
"Ausus

the hand-writing of Angelo Politiano, it appears that the poems of Statius were brought into Italy by the same indefatigable investigator. In the opinion of Politiano these poems were indeed inaccurate and defective, yet all the copies which he had seen were derived from this manuscript [q].

CHAP. I.

Poggio

" Ausus barbaricos populos penitusque reposta
" Poscere Lingonicis oppida celsa jugis.
" Illius ergo manu nobis, doctissime Rhetor,
" Integer in Latium, *Quintiliane*, redis;
" Illius atque manu, divina poemata *Sili*
" *Italici* redeunt, usque legenda suis:
" Et ne nos lateat variorum cultus agrorum,
" Ipse *Columellæ* grande reportat opus:
" Et te, *Lucreti*, longo post tempore, tandem
" Civibus et Patriæ reddit habere tuæ.
" Tartareis potuit fratrem revocare tenebris
" Alterna Pollux dum statione movet;
" Conjugis ac rursus nigras subitura lacunas
" Euridice sequitur fila canora sui.
" *Poggius* at sospes nigrâ e caligine tantos
" Ducit ubi æternum lux sit aperta viros."
Land. Eleg. ap. Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. vol. i. *p.* 93.

[q] " Incidi in exemplar Statii Silvarum, quod ex Gallia " *Poggius*, gallicâ scriptum manu, in Italiam adtulerat; " a quo videlicet uno, licet mendoso depravatoque, et " (ut arbitror) etiam dimidiato, reliqui omnes codices " qui sunt in manibus emanarunt."
Pol. ap. Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. Plut. xxxii. *Cod.* 10.

CHAP. I. Poggio had once formed the fullest expectations of obtaining a copy of the Decades of Livy, which a monk had assured him he had seen in the Cistercian monastery of Sora, comprised in two volumes in large Lombard characters[r]. He immediately wrote to a friend at Florence, requesting him to prevail on Cosmo de' Medici to direct his agent in that neighbourhood to repair to the monastery, and to purchase the work. Some time afterwards Poggio addressed himself to Leonello de' Este, marquis of Ferrara, on the same subject, but apparently without any great hopes of success[s]. His attempts to recover the writings of Tacitus, were equally fruitless[t]. After long inquiry, he was convinced that no copy of that author existed in

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[r] "Duo sunt volumina magna, oblonga, literis Longobardis in monasterio de Sora ordinis Cisterciensium prope Roschild, ad duo milliaria Theutonica, quo adiri potest a Lubich biduo amplius. Cura ergo ut Cosmus scribat quamprimum diligenter ad Gherardum de Bueris, ut si opus sit, ipse eo se conferat, imo omnino se conferat ad monasterium, nam si hoc verum est, triumphandum erit de Dacis."

Poggii Ep. ap. Trav. Ep. v. i. *præf. p.* 46.

[s] *Poggius de Var. For. p.* 215.

[t] *Trav. Ep. v.* i. *præf. p.* 47.

in Germany; yet at the distance of nearly a century, the five books of his history were brought from thence to Rome, and presented to Leo X. In prosecution of his favourite object, Poggio extended his researches into England, where he resided some time with the cardinal bishop of Winchester[u]; and from whence he transmitted to Italy the Bucolicks of Calphurnius, and a part of the works of Petronius[v]. CHAP. I.

The researches of Guarino Veronese[w], of Giovanni Aurispa, and of Francesco Filelfo were

[u] Poggio has given a picture of the English nobility somewhat different from that of the present times—"Hos (Gallos) Britanni sequuntur, Angli hodie vocitati, qui nobiles in civitatibus morari ignominiæ loco putant, rura, sylvis ac pascuis seclusa inhabitant; nobiliorem ex censu judicant; rem rusticam curant, vendentes lanam et armentorum fœtus; neque turpe existimant admisceri quæstui rusticano."

Poggius de Nobilitate, in Opt. Bas. 1538. *p.* 69.

[v] At least there is reason to conjecture so, from a passage in a letter from Poggio to Niccolo Niccoli: "Mittas ad me oro Bucolicam Calphurnii et partiunculam Petronii quas misi tibi ex Britannia," &c.

Trav. Ept. v. i. *præf. p.* 29.

[w] Many particulars respecting Guarino may be collected from the poems of his pupil Janus Pannonius, printed

CHAP. I. were directed towards another quarter. For the purpose of procuring ancient manuscripts, and of acquiring a competent knowledge of the Greek language, they visited Constantinople and other parts of the east, where their perseverance was repaid by the acquisition of many valuable works. Guarino on his return to Italy was shipwrecked, and unfortunately for himself and the world, lost his treasures. So pungent was his grief upon this occasion, that if we may believe the relation of one of his countrymen, his hair became suddenly white[x]. Aurispa was more successful; he arrived at Venice in the year 1423, with two hundred and thirty-eight manuscripts, amongst which were all the works of

Guarino Veronese

Giovanni Aurispa.

printed at *Basil* by Frobenius, in 1518, and which are possessed of considerable merit. Of these poems a new and improved edition was published at Utrecht in 1784, in 2 vols. 8vo. Guarino was born in 1370, and was the first native Italian who publickly taught the Greek tongue in Italy. He is, however, more celebrated as a preceptor than as an author. Almost all the learned men of the fifteenth century have profited by his instructions, but his diction is considered by Cortesi as harsh and inelegant. *Cort. de hom. doctis. Flor.* 1734.

[x] Pontico Virunio, Scrittore dei primi anni del secolo xvi.

Ap. Tirab. Storia della Lett. Ital. v. vi. *p.* 1. *p.* 89.

of Plato, of Proclus, of Pl
Xenophon, the histories o
of Diodorus Siculus, the
the poems of Callimachu
pian, and those attributed
of his epistles to Traversa
are particularly enumerate
not at present known, and
perished[y]. The large su
Aurispa had expended in
derable a number of book
conveying them to Venic
finances, and he was obli
versari to procure him the
relieve him from his emba
readily supplied by Cosm
brother Lorenzo, to who
his obligations with great
sincerity[z].

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[y] *Aurispæ Ep. in Epistolis A*

[z] "Volui ego Cosmo et L
"me beneficiis gratias agere
"scribo, sed non poteram c
"eis obligari videor. Quamc
"tuæ reliqui."
Aurispæ Ep. in Trav.

CHAP. I.

Francesco Filelfo.

Filelfo was about twenty years of age when he undertook his expedition to Constantinople, where he remained about seven years, and married the daughter of the noble and learned John Chrysoloras. In the year 1427 he returned to Italy with a great number of manuscripts which he had collected; and made a conspicuous figure amongst the literati there during the chief part of the fifteenth century, having been successively engaged as professor of different branches of science, at most of the universities and seminaries of education throughout that country. With all his learning, Filelfo had not acquired the art of controlling his own temper, which was in a high degree petulant, suspicious, and arrogant. His whole life was passed in quarrels and dissentions. At some times he narrowly escaped the publick punishment due to his excesses; at others, the effects of the private resentment of those whom he had offended. He was even accused of having conspired against the life of Cosmo de' Medici, and of having engaged a Greek assassin to murder him. Their disagreement seems to have taken place during the exile of Cosmo at Venice. Amongst the letters of Filelfo there are some to Cosmo, in which he falls greatly short of the respect which he owed him for his patronage; and wherein

wherein he inveighs with much rancour against Niccolo Niccoli and Carlo Aretino, the particular friends of Cosmo[a]. From several of these letters he appears to have had frequent apprehensions of assassination; and even affects to accuse Cosmo of favouring the attempt[b]. How much

CHAP. I.

[a] Nicolaum Nicolum nosti; hic loquacior est, et levior; at Carolus Aretinus, ut est versuto occultoque ingenio, et eo plane improbo, ita mihi maxime inimicus. Is apud Medices plurimum potest. And the character he gives of Cosmo in a letter to the Cardinal of Bologna, dated 1432, is sufficiently invidious: "Cosmus quamquam vide-
"tur amantissimus mei, ejusmodi tamen virum esse
"animadverto qui et simulet et dissimulet omnia. Estque
"usque adeo taciturnus ut ne ab intimis quidem fami-
"liaribus ac domesticis queat intelligi."

Phil. Ep. p. 18, 19. *Ed.* 1501.

[b] By a letter of Filelfo to Lapo Castellionchio, which came to the sight of Ambrogio Traversari, it appeared that he expressed himself in terms of resentment against both Traversari and Cosmo de' Medici. Traversari upbraided him with his duplicity, and Filelfo attempted to justify it by accusing Cosmo, in his reply, of a design on his life. "De Cosmi Medices in me animo nihil est quod minus
"credam. Nam quam me sit exosus jam pridem expertus
"sum. Istius in me benevolentiam Philippus sicarius
"declaret—itaque de reconcilianda gratia mihi posthac
"verbum nullum facito. Sicis ipse venenisque utatur.
"Ego autem ingenio et calamo."

Phil. Ep. p. 26.

CHAP. I. much Cosmo was superiour to such imputations, appeared in the moderation of his conduct, which at length overcame even the arrogance and resentment of Filelfo himself; who lived to receive innumerable favours from him and his descendants; and died at Florence in the year 1481, in the eighty-third year of his age.

The productions of Filelfo are very numerous, and in almost every branch of literature[c]. His industry in collecting manuscripts was however of more indisputable service to the cause of learning. Of the particular works brought by him into Italy he has not left a very explicit account, but it appears that he had sent a considerable number to his friend Leonardo Giustiniani at Venice, from whom he found some difficulty in obtaining them after his return. The letters of Filelfo contain indeed innumerable

[c] A very extensive catalogue of them may be found in the *Dissert. Voss.* of Apostolo Zeno. The character of Filelfo is well given by Paolo Cortesi (*De hom. doctis. p.* 32.) "Habebat a natura ingenium vagum, multiplex, "volubile. Exstant ab eo scripta, et poemata, et orationes; "sed ut vita, sic erat in toto genere varius. Erat vendi- "bilis sane scriptor, et is, qui opes, quam scribendi "laudem consequi malebat."

innumerable complaints of the injustice of his friends, in withholding the books which he had lent for their use, or intrusted to their care. Perhaps, says Tiraboschi, they acted upon the same principle as the enthusiasts of the darker ages, who considered the stealing the relicks of a saint, not as a theft, but as a pious and meritorious act. Such was the high estimation in which these works were held, that a manuscript of the history of Livy, sent by Cosmo de' Medici to Alfonso king of Naples, with whom he was at variance, conciliated the breach between them, and although the king's physicians insinuated that the book was probably poisoned, Alfonso disregarded their suspicions, and began with great pleasure the perusal of the work.

CHAP. I.

In the year 1438, a general council was held by Eugenius IV. at Ferrara, for the purpose of settling some contested points, both of doctrine and discipline, between the Greek and Roman churches, preparatory to their proposed union; but the plague having made its appearance at that place, the council was in the following year transferred to Florence. On this occasion, not only the pope and several of his cardinals, the Greek patriarch and his metropolitans, but the emperour of the east, John Paleologus, attended in

Council of Florence.

1438.

CHAP. I.

in person. Shortly before their arrival, Cosmo had been invested a second time with the office of Gonfaloniere, and the reception that he gave to these illustrious visiters, whilst it was highly honourable to his guests, was extremely gratifying to the citizens of Florence, who were as remarkable for the magnificence of their publick exhibitions, as for their moderation and frugality in private life. As the questions agitated at this council would not admit of illustration from reasoning, and could only be argued from authority, the longer the dispute continued, the more were the parties at variance; but the critical situation of the eastern empire, then closely attacked by the Turks, and the expectations which the emperour had formed of procuring succours from the pope, and from other European princes, reconciled what the efforts of the schoolmen had only served to perplex. The proposed union accordingly took place; and the pope was acknowledged by the whole assembly as the legitimate successour of St. Peter. Little advantage was however derived by either of the parties from this remarkable transaction. The emperour was disappointed in his expectations of support, and with respect to the supremacy of the Roman church over the Greek, the ecclesiasticks of the latter refused to obey the decree;

decree; and even many, who had been present and signed it at the council, publickly retracted at Constantinople[d]. CHAP. I.

Revival of the Platonick philosophy.

For the purpose of conducting these important debates, each of the parties had selected six disputants, eminent for their rank and learning. Amongst those chosen on the part of the Greeks, was Gemisthus Pletho, who was then at a very advanced period of a life which had been devoted to the study of the Platonick philosophy[e]. As often as his publick avocations afforded him an opportunity, he employed himself in the propagation of his opinions, which were not only new to the scholars of Italy, but were greatly at variance with those doctrines which had long obtained an uninterrupted ascendency in all the publick schools and seminaries of learning. So powerful

[d] A full and interesting account of the visit of the Greek emperour to Italy, and of the proceedings and consequences of the council of Florence, may be found in Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, c. 66.

[e] Pletho, though living in 1439, had been the preceptor of Emanuel Chrysoloras, the great promoter of Grecian literature in Italy, whom he however long survived, having lived to the extended age of one hundred years. *Hodius de Græcis illustribus, p.* 22. *Ed. Lond.* 1742.

CHAP. I. powerful was the effect which the discourses of Gemisthus had upon Cosmo de' Medici, who was his constant auditor, that he determined to establish an academy at Florence, for the sole purpose of cultivating this new and more elevated species of philosophy. With this view he selected Marsilio Ficino, the son of his favourite physician, and destined him, though very young, to be the support of his future establishment. The education of Ficino was, as he has himself informed us, entirely directed to the new philosophy[f]. The doctrines and precepts of the Grecian sage were assiduously instilled into his infant mind, and as he increased in years, he applied

[f] Thus he speaks of his education in his proem to his translation of the works of Plotinus, addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici: "Magnus Cosmus, senatus consulto patriæ "pater, quo tempore concilium inter Græcos atque La- "tinos, sub Eugenio pontifice, Florentiæ tradabatur; "philosophum Græcum nomine Gemisthum, cognomine "Plethonem, quasi Platonem alterum, de mysteriis pla- "tonicis disputantem frequenter audivit. E cujus ore "fervente, sic afflatus est protinus, sic animatus, ut inde "*Academiam* quandam alta mente conceperit, hanc oppor- "tuno primo tempore pariturus. Deinde cum concep- "tum tantum magnus ille Medices quodammodo partu- "riret, me, electissimi Medici sui filium, adhuc puerum "tanto operi destinavit," &c. *Plotini op. Flor.* 1492. *per Ant. Miscominum magnifico sumptu Laurentii Medicis patriæ servatoris.*

applied himself to the study, not of the works of Plato only, but also of those of Plotinus, a distinguished promoter of the doctrines of that philosopher in the third century. Nor were the expectations which Cosmo had formed of Ficino disappointed. The Florentine academy was some years afterwards established with great credit, and was the first institution in Europe for the pursuit of science, detached from the scholastick method then universally adopted. It is true, the sublime and fanciful doctrines of Plato were almost as remote from the purposes of common life, and general utility, as the dogmatick opinions of Aristotle: but the introduction of the former was nevertheless of essential service to the cause of free inquiry, and substantial knowledge. By dividing the attention of the learned, they deprived the doctrines of Aristotle of that servile respect and veneration which had so long been paid to them: and by introducing the discussion of new subjects, they prepared the way for the pursuit of truths more properly within the sphere of the human intellect.

Cosmo establishes the Laurentian Library.

As the natural disposition of Cosmo led him to take an active part in collecting the remains of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, so he was

CHAP. I. was enabled by his wealth, and his extensive mercantile intercourse with different parts of Europe, and of Asia, to gratify a passion of this kind beyond any other individual. To this end he laid injunctions on all his friends and correspondents, as well as on the missionaries and preachers who travelled into the remotest countries, to search for and procure ancient manuscripts, in every language, and on every subject[s]. Besides the services of Poggio and Traversari, Cosmo availed himself of those of Cristoforo Buondelmonti, Antonio da Massa, Andrea de Rimino, and many others. The situation of the eastern empire, then daily falling into ruins by the repeated attacks of the Turks, afforded him an opportunity of obtaining many inestimable works in the Hebrew, Greek, Chaldaic, Arabic, and

[s] "The example of the Roman pontiff was preceded "or imitated by a Florentine merchant, who governed "the republick without arms, and without a title. Cosmo "of Medici was the father of a line of princes, whose "name and age are almost synonymous with the restora- "tion of learning: his credit was ennobled into fame; "his riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; "he corresponded at once with Cairo and London, and "a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books were often "imported in the same vessel." *Gibbon's Hist. of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, c.* 66.

and Indian languages[h]. From these beginnings arose the celebrated library of the Medici, which, after having been the constant object of the solicitude of its founder, was after his death further enriched by the attention of his descendants, and particularly of his grandson Lorenzo; and after various vicissitudes of fortune, and frequent and considerable additions, has been preserved to the present times under the name of the *Bibliotheca Mediceo-Laurentiana*.

Niccolo Niccoli founds the Library of S. Marco.

Amongst those who imitated the example of Cosmo de' Medici was Niccolo Niccoli, another citizen of Florence, who devoted his whole time and fortune to the acquisition of ancient manuscripts; in this pursuit he had been eminently successful, having collected together eight hundred volumes of Greek, Roman, and Oriental authors; a number in those times justly thought very considerable. Several of these works he had copied with great accuracy, and had diligently employed himself in correcting their defects and arranging the text in its proper order. In this respect he is justly regarded by

[h] *Bandini, Lettera sopra i principj e progressi della Biblioteca Laurenziana. Firenze*, 1773.

CHAP. I. by Mehus as the father of this species of criticism[i]. He died in 1436, having by his will directed that his library should be devoted to the use of the publick, and appointed sixteen Curators, amongst whom was Cosmo de' Medici. After his death it appeared that he was greatly in debt, and that his liberal intentions were likely to be frustrated by the insolvency of his circumstances. Cosmo therefore proposed to his associates, that if they would resign to him the right of disposition of the books, he would himself discharge all the debts of Niccolò; to which they readily acceded. Having thus obtained the sole direction of the manuscripts, he deposited them, for publick use, in the Dominican monastery of S. Marco at Florence, which he had himself erected at an enormous expense[k]. This

[i] *In præf. ad. Ep. Trav. p.* 50.

[k] From the funeral oration of Niccolo Niccoli, by Poggio, we learn, that the most celebrated collections that had been formed in Italy, before that of Niccolo, were those of Petrarca, of Lodovico Marsilio an Augustine monk, of Boccaccio, and of Colucio Salutati. The first of these was sold and dispersed after the death of its possessor. Marsilio and Boccaccio bequeathed their collections to the library of the Augustine monastery at Florence; and that of Colucio, which almost equaled in number the library of Niccolo, was sold by his children after

This collection was the foundation of another celebrated library in Florence, known by the name of the *Bibliotheca Marciana;* which is yet open to the inspection of the learned, at the distance of three centuries[1].

CHAP. I.

In

after his decease. To Niccolo Niccoli we must therefore attribute the honour of having set the first example of forming in Italy an institution so favourable to the interests of learning, as a *publick library*.—" Id egit vir egre-
" gius, doctorum virorum amantissimus, quod nullum
" multis antea seculis fecisse, neque memoria hominum
" constat, neque ullæ literæ prodiderunt. Rem sane
" statuit temporum omnium ac seculorum laudibus cele-
" brandam. Ex libris, quos homo nequaquam opulentus,
" et rerum persæpe inops, supra octingentos codices,
" summo labore ac diligentia comparuerat, decrevit testa-
" mento fieri per amicos publicam bibliothecam, ad utili-
" tatem hominum sempiternam. O præclarissimum
" omnium quem unquam condita sunt et utilissimum
" testamentum! quo non unum aliquem, aut alterum,
" sed tum Græcas, tum Latinas musas, hujus preciosissimi
" thesauri reliquit hæredes."

Poggius in funere Nic. in op. Basil, 277.

[1] Tiraboschi suspects that the books collected by Cosmo and by Niccolo Niccoli were united together in the library of S. Marco, and that Lorenzo was the first of his family who began a collection under his own roof. (*Storia della Lett. Ital. vol.* vi. *parte* i. *p.* 98.) But ample evidence remains of the establishment of a domestick library by Cosmo. To say nothing of the authority of the

CHAP. I.

In the arrangement of the library of S. Marco, Cosmo had procured the assistance of Tomaso Calandrino, who drew up a scheme for that purpose, and prepared a scientifick catalogue

The Vatican Library founded by Pope Nicholas V.

the modern Florentine bibliographers, and particularly of Bandini, (*Lettera sopra i principj*, &c.) I may cite the explicit testimony of Alberto Avogradi, a contemporary of Cosmo, who addressed to him a poem in two books, entitled, *De religione & magnificentia illustris Cosmi Medicæ Florentini*, which has been published by Lami, (*Deliciæ Erudit. v.* 12.) in which these two collections are distinctly adverted to. Speaking in his first book of the publick buildings erected by Cosmo, and particularly of the monastery of S. Marco, he adds,

" Post cellas gravis iste labor numerare libellos
" Quos duplici linguâ bibliotheca tenet:
" Ista tenet *nostros*, servat pars altera *Græcos*,
" Quis poterit quot sunt enumerare libros?"

But in his second book, when he describes the palace of Cosmo, he expatiates largely on his library.

" Iste colit musas, colit hic quoque verba soluta:
" O mira in *tectis bibliotheca suis!*
" Nunc legit altisoni sparsim pia scripta *Maronis*,
" Nunc *Augustini* sacra notata pii.
" Aut ea quæ *Cicero; Senecæ* moralibus atque
" Insudat, memori mente notanda notans.
" Interdum ne fors semper sua pectora curis
" Repleat, adveniant dulcia scripta jubet,
" Et quando accedit *Naso*, vel quando *Tibullus;*
" Aut priscis lectis sæpe moderna legit,
" Atque novas laudat musas, nova carmina spectans
" Dicit, habet faciles hæc nova musa modos."

logue of the books it contained. In selecting a coadjutor, the choice of Cosmo had fallen upon an extraordinary man. Though Tomaso was the son of a poor physician of Sarzana, and ranked only in the lower order of the clergy, he had the ambition to aim at possessing some specimens of these venerable relicks of ancient genius. His learning and his industry enabled him to gratify his wishes, and his perseverance surmounted the disadvantages of his situation. In this pursuit he was frequently induced to anticipate his scanty revenue, well knowing, that the estimation in which he was held by his friends, would preserve him from pecuniary difficulties. With the Greek and Roman authors no one was more intimately acquainted, and as he wrote a very fine hand, the books he possessed acquired additional value from the marginal observations which he was accustomed to make in perusing them. By the rapid degrees of fortunate preferment, Tomaso was, in the short space of twelve months, raised from his humble situation to the chair of St. Peter[m], and in eight years, during which time he enjoyed the supreme dignity, by the name of Nicholas V. acquired a reputation that has increased with the increasing estimation

CHAP. I.

[m] *Bart. Facius de viris illustribus. Flor.* 1745.

CHAP. I. estimation of those studies which he so liberally fostered and protected. The scanty library of his predecessors had been nearly dissipated or destroyed by frequent removals between Avignon and Rome, according as the caprice of the reigning pontiff chose either of those places for his residence; and it appears from the letters of Traversari, that scarcely any thing of value remained. Nicholas V. is therefore to be considered as the founder of the library of the Vatican. In the completion of this great design, it is true, much was left to be performed by his successours; but Nicholas had before his death collected upwards of five thousand volumes of Greek and Roman authors, and had not only expressed his intention of establishing a library for the use of the Roman Court, but had also taken measures for carrying such intention into execution[n].

Invention of printing.

Whilst the munificence of the rich, and the industry of the learned, were thus employed throughout Italy in preserving the remains of the ancient authors, some obscure individuals in a corner of Germany had conceived, and were silently bringing to perfection, an invention, which,

[n] *Trav. Ep. in præf. p.* 65.

which, by means equally effectual and unexpected, secured to the world the result of their labours. This was the art of printing with moveable types; a discovery of which the beneficial effects have been increasing to the present day, and are yet advancing with accelerated progress°. The coincidence of this discovery with

° Of the numerous authors who have minutely inquired into the rise of this useful art, no one has had greater opportunities of obtaining information, or has pursued his inquiries with more accuracy than Mr. Heineken, who has clearly shewn, that the fabrication of cards for games of chance, was first practised in Germany, and was in use before the close of the fourteenth century. Not long afterwards, the same art that had at first been subservient to the amusement, was employed to gratify the superstition of the people, and it became usual to cut upon blocks of wood the figures of saints, with inscriptions. Mr. Heineken has cited an indisputable specimen of the latter, so early as the year 1423. These inscriptions gave the first idea of printing with tablets of wood, which are well known to have led the way to the invention of moveable types. The first book printed with such types was a copy of the bible, which made its appearance between the years 1450 and 1452. This discovery is certainly to be attributed to the Germans, whether it consisted in printing with blocks of wood, or with types moveable at pleasure. John Guttenburg of Mayence has the best claim to the honour of an invention which has so essentially contributed to enlarge the sphere of action of the human faculties. *Idée générale d'une collection complete d'estampes. Leipsic & Vienne*, 1771.

CHAP. I. with the spirit of the times in which it had birth, was highly fortunate. Had it been made known at a much earlier period, it would have been disregarded, or forgotten, from the mere want of materials on which to exercise it; and had it been further postponed, it is probable, that, notwithstanding the generosity of the rich, and the diligence of the learned, many works would have been totally lost, which are now justly regarded as the noblest monuments of the human intellect.

Capture of Constantinople.

Nearly the same period of time that gave the world this important discovery, saw the destruction of the Roman empire in the east. 1453. In the year 1453 the city of Constantinople was captured by the Turks, under the command of Mahomet II. after a vigorous defence of fifty-three days. The encouragement which had been shewn to the Greek professors at Florence, and the character of Cosmo de' Medici as a promoter of letters, induced many learned Greeks to seek a shelter in that city, where they met with a welcome and honourable reception. Amongst these were Demetrius Chalcondyles, Johannes Andronicus Calistus, Constantius and Johannes Lascaris, in whom the Platonick philosophy obtained fresh partisans, and by whose support it began openly to oppose itself to that of Aristotle.

stotle[p]. Between the Greek and Italian professors a spirit of emulation was kindled, that operated most favourably on the cause of letters. Publick schools were instituted at Florence for the study of the Greek tongue. The facility of diffusing their labours by means of the newly-discovered art of printing, stimulated the learned to fresh exertions; and in a few years the cities of Italy vied with each other in the number and elegance of works produced from the press[q].

Towards

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[p] The celebrated Johannes Argyropylus, though ranked by Dr. Hody amongst the learned Greeks who did not arrive in Italy until after the capture of Constantinople, had undoubtedly taken up his residence there before that event, as is fully shewn by Mehus.

Præf. ad Trav. Ep. v. i. *præf.* 20.

[q] Although Italy has no pretensions to the invention of printing, it was the first country that followed the example of Germany, and that with such ardour, as not only to outvie the rest of Europe in the number of printed works, but even to give speedy perfection to the art. Much investigation has been employed in determining in what city of Italy it was first practised, and attempts have been made to shew that Venice produced the "*Decor Puellarum*," in 1461, and Milan, the "*Historiæ Augustæ Scriptores*," in 1465. The evidence of these is at least doubtful; but it is certain, that in the year last mentioned, the works of Lactantius were printed at the monastery

CHAP. I.

Towards the latter period of his life, a great part of the time that Cosmo could withdraw from the

Cosmo applies himself to study.

nastery of Soubiaco, in the Campagna of Rome, and that the grammatical work of Donatus had before issued from the same press. The character used by the German inventers was the *Gothick*, and those of the early Roman printers partook of the same form, but in a few years it was superseded by the character now in general use, which has therefore obtained the name of *Roman*. In the year 1471 this art was practised in Naples, Bologna, Ferrara, and Florence, and in a short time there was scarcely a place of any note in Italy in which it was unattempted. The *Carattere Corsivo*, or running type, was the invention of the celebrated Aldo Manutio, and being first used in Italy, thence acquired the name of the *Italick*, or Aldine character. Strictly speaking, however, the Roman character itself was derived from the *cursive character* of the ancient Romans, as it appeared in the MSS. of the times, with such corrections and improvements as were suitable to the taste of the letter-founder, and not from the original or primary character. That both the Greeks and Romans had a smaller, distinct, and more ready character for common use, is well known; and from that of the Romans all the modern European characters are supposed to have been derived. "Ex illo "autem minusculo charactere cursivo, quam veteribus "Romanis, ut et Græcis notum fuisse demonstravimus, "defluxerunt illi characteres quos Cl. Mabillon, *lib.* i. "*cap.* II. *de arte diplomatica*, et hinc Cl. Abbas Gode- "fridus, in *Chron. Gottwicensi, tom.* i. *p.* 16. vocant *Gothicos*, "*Longobardicos*, *Franco-gallicos*, seu *Merovingicos*, *Caroli-* "*nos*,

the administration of publick affairs was passed at his seats at Careggi and Caffaggiolo, where he applied himself to the cultivation of his farms from which he derived no inconsiderable revenue. But his happiest hours were devoted to the study of letters and philosophy, or passed in the company and conversation of learned men. When he retired at intervals to his seat at Careggi, he was generally accompanied by Ficino, where, after having been his protector, he became his pupil in the study of the Platonick philosophy. For his use Ficino began those laborious translations of the works of Plato and his followers, which were afterwards completed and published in the lifetime and by the liberality of Lorenzo. Amongst the letters of Ficino is one from his truly venerable patron, which bespeaks most forcibly the turn of his mind, and his earnest desire of acquiring knowledge, even at his advanced period of life[r]. "*Yester-*

CHAP. I.

" *nos*, *Anglo-saxonicos*, *Toletanos*, *Sueco-gothicos*, &c. Om-
" nes illi characteres, primo adspectu dissimiles, ad unum
" eundemque *cursivum* veterum Romanorum, veluti ad
" suam fontem revocandi sunt; et varias pro variis et re-
" gionibus, et sæculis, et librariorum manibus induerunt
" formas." *Villoison Anecd. Græc. p.* 149.——For the above extract, elucidating this curious subject, I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. Parr.

[r] *Ficini Ep. lib.* i. *Ep.* 1.

CHAP. I. "*Yesterday*," says he, "*I arrived at Careggi—not so much for the purpose of improving my fields, as myself—let me see you, Marsilio, as soon as possible, and forget not to bring with you the book of our favourite Plato*, DE SUMMO BONO—*which I presume, according to your promise, you have ere this translated into Latin; for there is no employment to which I so ardently devote myself as to find out the true road to happiness. Come then, and fail not to bring with you the Orphean lyre.*" Whatever might be the proficiency of Cosmo in the mysteries of his favourite philosopher, there is reason to believe that he applied those doctrines and precepts which furnished the litigious disputants of the age with a plentiful source of contention, to the purposes of real life and practical improvement. Notwithstanding his active and useful life, he often regretted the hours he had lost. *Midas was not more sparing of his money*, says Ficino, *than Cosmo was of his time.*

Marriage of Piero de' Medici.

The wealth and influence that Cosmo had acquired, had long entitled him to rank with the most powerful princes of Italy, with whom he might have formed connexions by the intermarriage of his children; but being apprehensive, that such measures might give rise to suspicions that he entertained designs inimical to the freedom of the state, he rather chose to increase his interest amongst the citizens of Florence,

Florence, by the marriage of his children into the most distinguished families of that place. Piero his eldest son married Lucretia Tornabuoni, by whom he had two sons, Lorenzo, the subject of our present history, born on the first day of January 1448, and Giuliano, born in the year 1453. Piero had also two daughters, Nannina, who married Bernardo Rucellai, and Bianca, who became the wife of Gulielmo de' Pazzi. Giovanni, the younger son of Cosmo, espoused Cornelia de' Alessandri, by whom he had a son who died very young. Giovanni himself did not long survive. He died in the year 1461, at forty-two years of age. Living under the shade of paternal authority, his name scarcely occurs in the pages of history; but the records of literature bear testimony, that in his disposition and studies he did not derogate from the reputation of that characteristick attachment to men of learning, by which his family was invariably distinguished[s].

CHAP. I.

Birth of Lorenzo and Giuliano.

Besides

[s] In the Laurentian library are several manuscripts which appear to have been copied for his use. At the close of the works of Lactantius (Plut. xxi. Cod. 2.) is the following memorial—*Scriptus autem fuit manu mea Gerardi Johannis del Ciriagio civis et notarii Florentini pro Johanne*

CHAP. I.

Besides his legitimate offspring, Cosmo left also a natural son, Carlo de' Medici, whom he liberally educated, and who compensated the disadvantages of his birth by the respectability of his life. The manners of the times might be alleged in extenuation of a circumstance apparently

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Johanne Cosmi de' Medicis optimo et primario cive Florentino de anno Domini MCCCCLVIII. *Florentiæ, Laus Deo.*—Similar memorials occur in other instances. (*Bandinii, Cat. Bib. Laur.*) Nicolo Tignosio inscribed to Giovanni de' Medici his treatise *De laudibus Cosmi patris ejus.* On his death Naldo Naldio addressed a Latin poem to his father, which is printed in the *Carmina illust. Poet. Ital. v.* 6. *p.* 451. The same work contains other testimonies of the regret that attended his loss. I shall content myself with giving one of the several epitaphs that Peregrino Allio wrote upon this occasion:

Hic sita magnanimi *Medicis* sunt ossa *Joannis*
Quanto heu privata est urbsque, domusque viro!
Fratre Petro, patriæque bonis, Cosmoque parente,
Ac tanto rerum culmine dignus erat.

The death of Giovanni de' Medici may afford a useful lesson: and I shall not conceal from my readers, that in the manuscript I have before cited, entitled, *Origine e descendenza della casa de' Medici*, this event is said to have been attributed to *high living*. "Molti vogliono che "tal morte di Giovanni derivasse dal soverchio bere e "mangiare, perche era di natura caldissimo, e bevendo "e mangiando tutte robe calde furono poi la cagione "della sua morte."

rently inconsistent with the gravity of the character of Cosmo de' Medici; but Cosmo himself disclaimed such apology, and whilst he acknowledged his youthful indiscretion, made amends to society for the breach of a salutary regulation, by attending to the morals and the welfare of his illegitimate descendant. Under his countenance Carlo became canon of Prato, and one of the apostolick notaries; and as his general residence was at Rome, he was frequently resorted to by his father and brothers, for his advice and assistance in procuring ancient manuscripts and other valuable remains of antiquity[t].

The death of Giovanni de' Medici, on whom Cosmo had placed his chief expectations, and the

[t] Plures extant in tabulario Mediceo Caroli Epistolæ, tum ad patrem tum ad fratres, in quibus de rebus suis et emendis Græcis et Latinis codicibus scribit. Cetera inter mandatum habuit a Cosmo, ut Phalaridis Epistolas, e Græco, in Latinum convertendas curaret. Inter Protonotarios apostolicos relatus fuit, ac demum collegio Canonicorum Pratensium præfuit. Extat in principe æde prope sacrarium, marmoreum ejus monumentum, a Dantio Aretino scalptum, cum hoc titulo, CAROLO MEDICES COSMI FILIO PRÆPOSITO QUI OBIT MCDXCIIII.
Fabronius, in vita Cos. 2, 213.

CHAP. I. the weak state of health that Piero experienced, which rendered him unfit for the exertions of publick life, in so turbulent a place as Florence, raised great apprehensions in Cosmo, that at his decease, the splendour of his family would close. These reflections imbittered the repose of his latter days. A short time before his death, being carried through the apartments of his palace, after having recently lost his son, he exclaimed with a sigh, "*This is too great a house for so small a family.*" These apprehensions were in some degree realized by the infirmities under which Piero laboured during the few years in which he held the direction of the republick; but the talents of Lorenzo soon dispelled this temporary gloom, and exalted his family to a degree of reputation and splendour, of which it is probable that Cosmo himself had scarcely formed an idea.

Celebrity of Cosmo de' Medici.

The kindness and attention shewn by Cosmo to men of learning were not without their reward. His virtues and his liberality were their most frequent topick. In every event of his life they were ready to attend him, to participate with him in his prosperity, and to sympathize with him in his misfortunes. The affectionate epistles addressed to him by Poggio on his banishment to Padua, and on his recall to Florence,

rence, exhibit a proof, not only of the sincere esteem, but of the high admiration of their author[u]. Of the continued attachment of Leonardo Aretino to his great patron, innumerable evidences remain. Amongst the eminent men of the time, who endeavoured to console him for the untimely loss of his son, was Pius II. who addressed to him a Latin epistle, to which Cosmo replied with great propriety and dignity, and in a style not inferiour to that of this learned pontiff[v]. To the poem of Alberto Avogradi, we have before had occasion to refer[w]. A considerable number of works, as well

CHAP. I.

[u] *Poggii Ep. in Op. p.* 312. 339. *Ed. Basil.*

[v] These letters will be found in the Appendix, No. IV.

[w] "*De religione et magnificentia Illustris Cosmi Medices Florentini.*" By which however the author only means to celebrate the buildings erected by Cosmo for publick and private use. Accordingly, in his first book he adverts to the churches of S. Marco and S. Lorenzo, the dormitory of the convent of S. Croce, the chapels of Boschetti and Monte Averno, and the monastery of Fiesole, of each of which he gives a description. He also alludes to the intention which Cosmo had then formed, and which he afterwards executed, of erecting at Jerusalem a house of reception

CHAP. I. well in verse as in prose, inscribed to him on different occasions, were, after his death, collected together by Bartolomeo Scala, and are yet preserved in the Laurentian Library, under the name of *Collectiones Cosmianæ*[x].

But

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reception for poor and infirm pilgrims, in which it seems he had to contend with the prejudices of the Saracens.

——" Domini tu sancta sepulchra,
" Quæ sunt *Jerusalem* condecorasse paras,
" Magna parat Cosmus, sed tu, Saladine, recusas,
O rapiant sensus, ista negata, tuos."

In the second book Avogradi recounts, in similar language, the magnificence of the palaces and other buildings erected by Cosmo for secular purposes.

[x] PLUT. LIV. COD. 10. This manuscript consists of *seventy-two* distinct pieces, composing a large volume in quarto, with the portrait of Cosmo prefixed to the work, which is also preceded by the following short introductory epistle from Scala to Lorenzo de' Medici:

" Bart. Scala, Laurentio Medici, urbis spei, S. D.
" Collegi, Laurenti charissime, scripta compluria et
" omnia fere in quæ manus inciderunt, ubi nomen Cosmi
" Avi tui, Patris hujus urbis legeretur. Ea redegi in
" volumen, quod mitto nunc ad te. Velim ut tantum
" otii subtrahas maximis tuis occupationibus, ut mira et
" legendi et intelligendi divini ingenii tui solertia omnia
" percurras; et si tibi videbuntur digna quæ legantur
" ab hominibus, alicui ex bibliothecis Cosmi ut inserantur
" curabis. Vale."

CHAP. I.

Antonio Beccatelli.

But perhaps the most extraordinary production that solicited the patronage of Cosmo, was the *Hermaphroditus* of Antonio Beccatelli, or, as he is usually called from Palermo, the place of his birth, Antonio Panhormita[y]. When the respectability and situation of Beccatelli are considered, our surprise must be excited on finding him the avowed author of a production so grossly indecent as the Hermaphroditus; when we

[y] Beccatelli was born of a respectable family, in 1394, and was for some years a publick professor of history and letters at Pavia, where he enjoyed the protection of Filippo Visconti, duke of Milan, and a salary of eight hundred gold crowns. After having received the laurel by the favour of the emperour Sigismund, he went to the court of Alfonso, king of Naples, in whose employ he passed the remainder of his days, honoured with the office of his secretary and counsellor, and the constant companion both of his studies and his military expeditions. His "*Dicta et facta Alphonsi Regis Arrogoniæ*," in four books, were commented on by Eneas Sylvius (Pope Pius II.) and have been frequently printed. His epistles and orations were published at Venice in 1553. His *Hermaphroditus* is divided into two books, containing short epigrammatick poems on a variety of subjects. Some of the least exceptionable may be found at the end of his "*Epistolæ et Orationes*," (*Ven.* 1553); and others in the "*Carmina illustrium Poetarum Italorum*." (*Vol.* ii. *p.* 109.) The remainder have been strictly confined within the limits of the Laurentian Library.

CHAP. I. we advert to the age and character of Cosmo de' Medici, it is no less extraordinary that he should be the patron to whom it is inscribed.

Beccatelli did not however escape without reprehension, for thus indulging, at an advanced age, a pruriency of imagination not excusable at any time of life. Amongst others, Filelfo and Lorenzo Valla exclaimed against his licentiousness. Invectives against the author were likewise poured out from the pulpit, and he was burnt in effigy at Ferrara, and afterwards at Milan. Valla had the charity to hope, that the third time the author might be burnt in his proper person[z]. Even Poggio, who in his *Facetiæ* had not confined himself within the strict limits of decorum, thought it necessary to

[z] "Declamarono contra di esso, insino dal pulpito, "*Bernardino da Siena*, e *Roberto da Lecce*, che in Bologna, "in Ferrara, e in Milano lo fecero abbrucciare nelle pub- "bliche piazze. Se dobbiam credere al *Valla* (*In Facium* "*Invect.* II. *p.* 543, *Ed. Basil*, 1540.) Non solo due volte "fu abbruciato il libro, ma il ritratto ancora del *Panor-* "*mita: Certe bis in celeberrimis Italiæ locis, primum Ferra-* "*riæ cum Papa Synodo adesset, iterum Mediolani omnium* "*populorum frequentia inspectante, per imaginem chartaceam* "*crematus est. Tertio per se ipsum cremandus ut spero.*"

Zeno Dissert. Voss. v. i. *p.* 316.

to remonstrate with his friend Beccatelli on the indecency of his work, though he highly commends its elegance and latinity[a]. Beccatelli attempted to excuse his performance by the authority of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, but his reply may be considered rather as a repetition than as a justification of his offence[b]. On the contrary, there were men of known talents who expressed their thorough approbation of this performance. A commendatory epistle of Guarino Veronese, is prefixed to the manuscript copy of it in the Laurentian Library, CHAP. I.

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[a] "Delectatus sum mehercle, varietate rerum, et "elegantia versuum, simulque admiratus sum res adeo "impudicas, adeo ineptas, tam venuste, tam composite "a te dici: atque ita multa exprimi turpiuscula, ut non "enarrari, sed agi videantur; nec ficta à te jocandi "causa, ut existimo, sed acta extimari possint. Laudo "ego doctrinam tuam, jocunditatem carminis, jocos ac "sales, tibique gratias ago pro portiuncula mea, qui "latinas musas, quæ jamdudum nimium dormierunt à "somno excitas. Pro charitate tamen, qua omnibus "debitores sumus, unum est quod te monere et debeo et "volo, ut scilicet deinceps graviora quædam mediteris."— "Scis enim non licere idem nobis, qui Christiani sumus, "quod olim poetis qui deum ignorabant."

Poggii Op. Ed. Bas. p. 49.

[b] *Beccatelli Epist. lib.* 4, *p.* 80.

CHAP. I. Library, in which he defends Beccatelli, by alleging the example of St. Jerome.

Literary Quarrels.

One of the most striking, though not the most pleasing features, in the history of the fifteenth century, is exhibited in the frequent and violent dissensions which occurred amongst the most distinguished scholars of the time. In some instances these disputes arose between the chiefs of the two leading sects of philosophy; whilst in others the contest was more personal, and originated in the high opinion entertained by the disputants of their own respective merits.

Bessarion and George of Trebisond.

The controversy between cardinal Bessarion and George Trapezuntius, or of Trebisond, was of the former kind. A Greek by birth, Bessarion had early imbibed the doctrines of Plato. Having attained the dignity of Bishop of Nice, he attended in his publick capacity the council of Florence, and was one of the disputants on the part of the Greeks. Whether Bessarion was alarmed at the disorderly state of his own country, or whether he found himself influenced by the arguments of his opponent, is uncertain; but soon after his return to Constantinople, he paid another visit to Italy, where he passed the remainder of his days. His learning and his integrity recommended him to Eugenius IV. who

who in the year 1439 honoured him with the purple; and it has been said, that a mistake made by his secretary prevented him from obtaining the pontifical dignity; but the futility of this tale of Jovius has been sufficiently exposed by Hody[c]. That he had nearly arrived at that honour is however certain; and his more fortunate competitor Pius II. endeavoured to console him for his disappointment, by bestowing upon him the empty title of Patriarch of Constantinople. In the year 1468, Bessarion gave a striking proof of his munificence and love of literature, by presenting his very valuable collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts to the state of Venice, to be deposited in the church of St. Mark. His letter to the senate on this occasion, gives us a most favourable idea of his temper and character[d]. George, though called of Trebisond, was a Cretan by birth, who, after having taught in different parts of Italy, was at length called to Rome by Nicholas V. and nominated one of the apostolick secretaries. His arrogant and haughty temper soon offended the pope, and he was compelled to spend the remainder

CHAP. I.

[c] *Hodius de Græcis illustribus, Lond.* 1742, *p.* 146. It is however related by Mr. Gibbon, b. xii. c. 66.

[d] *Lettere di Principi, v.* i. *p.* 2.

CHAP. I. remainder of his days in seeking a precarious subsistence in different parts of Greece and Italy. The dispute between him and Bessarion was occasioned by Theodore Gaza, who published a treatise against the Platonick philosophy, and in commendation of the opinions of Aristotle, to which Bessarion opposed a temperate and well-written reply. Gaza, overpowered by the arguments, or the authority of his adversary, declined any further controversy; but George of Trebisond boldly came forward to the relief of the declining cause of Aristotle, and in several invectives against the Platonists, endeavoured to throw an odium on their doctrines and their morals; insomuch, that there is scarcely a crime with which he hesitates to charge them, or a publick calamity which he does not ascribe to the prevalence of their system. This attack again called forth Bessarion, who, in his treatise "*In Calumniatorem Platonis*[e]," is considered as having obtained a complete victory over his opponent. Other learned Greeks then in Italy joined in the debate. The Italians were indeed silent spectators of the controversy; but the eloquence of Bessarion, and the example and patronage of the Medici,

[e] First printed by Sweynheim and Pannartz at Rome about 1470, and several times afterwards, particularly by Aldus in 1516.

Medici, overpowered the partisans of Aristotle, and the Platonick academy instituted by Cosmo, acquired additional strength, till by the countenance and support of his grandson Lorenzo, it arrived at its highest pitch of eminence. CHAP. I.

A debate of this nature, on an important subject, if kept within the bounds of decorum, affects not the disputants with any degree of opprobrium, except so far as it may attach to the erroneousness of their opinions, or the futility of their arguments: but this applies not to the other kind of controversy to which I have before alluded, and of which the age in question produced frequent instances. The turbulent and vindictive temper of Filelfo has already been animadverted on. Unwearied in soliciting the favours of the great, he often extorted promises which were never meant to be performed, but the breach of which infallibly brought down the weight of his resentment. Almost all the sovereigns of Italy were successively the subject of his indecent satire, or his exaggerated complaints. He did not however escape without full retribution for the abuse which he so liberally dealt around him. In Poggio he met with an antagonist, that, if possible, exceeded him in rancour and scurrility. Their dispute commenced in an attack made by Filelfo on the character of Poggio and Filelfo.

CHAP. I. Niccolo Niccoli, which, if we give credit even to his friend Leonardo Aretino, was not perfectly immaculate[f]. This gave occasion to the *invectivæ* of Poggio against Filelfo. If we for a moment suppose there could have been the slightest foundation for the charges exhibited against Filelfo in these pieces, he must have been a monster of depravity. After reproaching him with the meanness of his birth, Poggio pursues his track from place to place, successively accusing him of fraud, ingratitude, theft, adultery, and yet more scandalous crimes. The voyage of Filelfo to Constantinople was undertaken to shelter himself from punishment. The kindness of Chrysoloras, who received him destitute and friendless into his house, he repaid by debauching his daughter, whom Chrysoloras was therefore obliged to bestow upon him in marriage. Not satisfied with serious invective, Poggio has also introduced his adversary in his *Facetiæ;* and Filelfo will long be remembered as the original Hans Carvel of Prior, and La Fontaine[g]. The contentions

[f] For a curious instance of this, see *Leonardi Aretini, Epi. tom.* ii. *p.* 17.

[g] Mr. Warton (*Essay on Pope, v.* ii. *p.* 68.) traces the genealogy of this curious tale from Poggio to Rabelais, "Who,"

tentions of Poggio with Lorenzo Valla were carried on with an equal degree of rancour and licentiousness; and even his debate with Guarino Veronese on the comparative excellence of Scipio and Julius Cesar, was sufficiently acrimonious. By these quarrels the learned were divided into factions, and Leonardo Aretino, Poggio, Niccolo Niccoli, and Beccatelli, were opposed to Valla, Niccolo Perotti, and others; but the leaders of these parties often disagreed amongst themselves, and scrupled not at times to accuse each other of the most scandalous enormities. As these imputations were, however, attended by no very serious consequences, charity

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" Who," says he, " inserted it in his eighth book, and " thirty-third chapter; it was *afterwards* related in a " book called the *Hundred Novels*. Ariosto finishes his " fifth satire with it. Malespini also made use of it. " Fontaine, who imagined Rabelais to be the inventer of " it, was the sixth author who delivered it, as our Prior " was the last, though perhaps not the least spirited."— Mr. Warton had this information from the *Menagiana*; but he has mistaken his authority, in placing the writings of Rabelais *before* the well-known work of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, which is more ancient by nearly a century. Even Ariosto was prior to Rabelais, who was only the *fourth* amongst these *Hogs of Westphaly*. Of this Menage was well aware. *Menag.* i. 369.

CHAP. I. charity would lead us to conclude that they were mutually understood to be rather contests of skill between these literary gladiators, than proofs of real criminality in their respective antagonists. The life of a scholar is seldom stained by atrocious crimes; but that almost all the learned men of the age should have disgraced themselves by so shameless a degree of moral turpitude, is surely a supposition beyond the bounds of credibility.

Death and character of Cosmo de' Medici.

Cosmo now approached the period of his mortal existence, but the faculties of his mind yet remained unimpaired. About twenty days before his death, when his strength was visibly on the decline, he entered into conversation with Ficino, and, whilst the faint beams of a setting sun seemed to accord with his situation and his feelings, began to lament the miseries of life, and the imperfections inseparable from human nature.—As he continued his discourse, his sentiments and his views became more elevated; and from bewailing the lot of humanity, he began to exult in the prospect of that happier state towards which he felt himself approaching. Ficino replied by citing corresponding sentiments from the Athenian sages, and particularly from Xenocrates; and the last task imposed by Cosmo

Cosmo on his philosophick attendant, was to translate from the Greek the treatise of that author on death[h]. Having prepared his mind to wait with composure the awful event, his next concern was the welfare of his surviving family, to whom he was desirous of imparting, in a solemn manner, the result of the experience of a long and active life. Calling into his chamber his wife Contessina and his son Piero, he entered into a narrative of all his publick transactions; he gave a full account of his extensive mercantile connexions, and adverted to the state of his domestick concerns. To Piero he recommended a strict attention to the education of his sons, of whose promising talents he expressed his hopes and his approbation. He requested that his funeral might be conducted with as much privacy as possible, and concluded his paternal exhortations with declaring his willingness to submit to the disposal of Providence whenever he should be called upon. These admonitions were not lost on Piero, who communicated by letter to Lorenzo and Giuliano the

[h] This information we derive from the introduction of Ficino to his translation of that work, inserted in the *Collectiones Cosmianæ.*

CHAP. I. the impression which they had made upon his own mind[i]. At the same time, sensible of his own infirmities, he exhorted them to consider themselves not as children, but as men, seeing that circumstances rendered it necessary to put their abilities to an early proof. *A physician*, says Piero, *is hourly expected to arrive from Milan, but, for my own part, I place my confidence in God.* Either the physician did not arrive, or Piero's distrust of him was well founded, for, about six days afterwards, being the first day of August 1464, Cosmo died, at the age of seventy-five years, deeply lamented by a great majority of the citizens of Florence, whom he had firmly attached to his interest, and who feared for the safety of the city from the dissensions that were likely to ensue[k].

The

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[i] This letter yet remains, and gives us a very interesting account of the conduct of Cosmo shortly before his death. I have therefore inserted it in the Appendix, from the collection of Fabroni. *App. No.* V.

[k] In the Ricordi of Piero de' Medici is a particular account of the death of his father, a character of whom is there given, drawn with great truth and simplicity by the hand of filial affection. It is with pleasure I illustrate my work with these authentick documents. The family of the Medici thus become their own historians. *App. No.* VI.

CHAP. I.

The character of Cosmo de' Medici exhibits a combination of virtues and endowments rarely to be found united in the same person. If in his publick works he was remarkable for his magnificence, he was no less conspicuous for his prudence in private life. Whilst in the character of chief of the Florentine republick, he supported a constant intercourse with the sovereigns of Europe, his conduct in Florence was devested of all ostentation, and neither in his retinue, his friendships, or his conversation, could he be distinguished from any other respectable citizen. He well knew the jealous temper of the Florentines, and preferred the real enjoyment of authority, to that open assumption of it, which could only have been regarded as a perpetual insult, by those whom he permitted to gratify their own pride, in the reflection that they were the equals of Cosmo de' Medici.

In affording protection to the arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture, which then began to revive in Italy, Cosmo set the great example to those who, by their rank, and their riches, could alone afford them effectual aid. The countenance shewn by him to those arts, was not of that kind which their professors generally experience from the great; it was not conceded as a bounty, nor received as a favour; but

CHAP. I. but appeared in the friendship and equality that subsisted between the artist and his patron[l]. In the erection of the numerous publick buildings in which Cosmo expended incredible sums of money, he principally availed himself of the assistance of Michellozzo Michellozzi and Filippo Brunelleschi; the first of whom was a man of talents, the latter of genius[m]. Soon after his return from banishment, Cosmo engaged these two artists to form the plan of a mansion for his own residence. Brunelleschi gave

[l] Of this nature was the intercourse between Cosmo and Donatello. The treasures of the citizen were applied, under the direction of the sculptor, in the acquisition of the most beautiful specimens of ancient art. Donatello survived his patron; but Cosmo on his death recommended him to the attention of Piero his son, who amply provided for the wants of his age. Donatello died in 1466, and was buried in the church of S. Lorenzo, adjoining to the sepulchre of Cosmo, according to his own directions, for which he alleged as a reason, that as his soul had always been with Cosmo whilst living, so he desired their bodies might be near each other when dead.

[m] Before the time of Brunelleschi, the Italians had imitated in their publick buildings the Gothick structures of their German neighbours. He was the first who attempted to restore the Grecian orders of architecture, and under his control this important branch of art attained a degree of perfection which it had not known from the times of the ancients.

gave scope to his invention, and produced the design of a palace which might have suited the proudest sovereign in Europe; but Cosmo was led by that prudence which, in his personal accommodation, regulated all his conduct, to prefer the plan of Michellozzi, which united extent with simplicity, and elegance with convenience[n]. With the consciousness, Brunelleschi possessed also the irritability of genius, and in a fit of vexation he destroyed a design which he unjustly considered as disgraced by its not being carried into execution[o]. Having completed

CHAP. I.

[n] This venerable edifice is now the residence of the noble family of Riccardi, who, in the year 1659, purchased it from the grand duke Ferdinand II. Under the auspices of its present owner, the marquis Riccardi, whose extensive collection of manuscripts and antiquities is open to publick inspection, this mansion yet emulates its ancient glory. In the year 1715 an inscription was placed in one of the façades of the inner court, which will be found in the Appendix, No. VII.

[o] Cosmo had employed Brunelleschi in completing the church of S. Lorenzo, and in erecting the church and monastery of S. Bartolomeo, and acknowledged him, on all occasions, as the first architect of his time. After his death Cosmo also raised a monument to his memory.

Fab. in vitâ Cos. v. i. *p.* 155.

CHAP. I.

pleted his dwelling, Cosmo indulged his taste in ornamenting it with the most precious remains of ancient art, and in the purchase of vases, statues, busts, gems, and medals, expended no inconsiderable sum. Nor was he less attentive to the merits of those artists which his native place had recently produced. With Masaccio a better style of painting had arisen, and the cold and formal manner of Giotto and his disciples had given way to more natural and expressive composition. In Cosmo de' Medici this rising artist found his most liberal patron and protector. Some of the works of Masaccio were executed in the chapel of the Brancacci, where they were held in such estimation, that the place was regarded as a school of study by the most eminent artists who immediately succeeded him. Even the celebrated Michelagnolo, when observing these paintings many years afterwards, in company with his honest and loquacious friend Vasari, did not hesitate to express his decided approbation of their merits. The reputation of Masaccio was emulated by his disciple Filippo Lippi, who executed for Cosmo and his friends many celebrated pictures, of which Vasari has given a minute account. Cosmo however found no small difficulty in controlling the temper and regulating the eccentricities of this extraordinary character.

character[p]. If the efforts of these early masters did not reach the true end of the art, they afforded considerable assistance towards it; and whilst Masaccio and Filippo decorated with their admired productions the altars of churches and the apartments of princes, Donatello gave to marble a proportion of form, a vivacity of expression, to which his contemporaries imagined that nothing more was wanting; Brunelleschi raised the great dome of the cathedral of Florence; and Ghiberti cast in brass the stupendous doors of the church of St. John, which Michelagnolo deemed worthy to be the gates of paradise.

In

[p] His attachment to women was extreme; and if the favourite object resisted his assiduities, he found some consolation in painting her likeness. By this unconquerable propensity his labours were often interrupted, and an expedient adopted by Cosmo to remedy it nearly cost Filippo his life. Having engaged the painter to complete a piece of work for him, Cosmo made him a prisoner in his chamber; but a confinement of two days exhausted the patience of the artist. At the risk of his life he made his escape through the window, and devoted himself for several days to his pleasures, nor did he return till sought out and solicited by Cosmo, who heartily repented of a proceeding which, however friendly in its motive, was certainly somewhat too arbitrary.

CHAP. I. In his person Cosmo was tall; in his youth he possessed the advantage of a prepossessing countenance; what age had taken from his comeliness, it had added to his dignity, and in his latter years, his appearance was so truly venerable, as to have been the frequent subject of panegyrick[q]. His manner was grave and complacent, but upon many occasions he gave sufficient proofs that this did not arise from a want of talents for sarcasm; and the fidelity of the Florentine historians has preserved many of his shrewd observations and remarks[r]. When Rinaldo de' Albizi, who was then in exile, and meditated an attack upon his native place, sent a message to Cosmo, importing that the hen would shortly hatch, he replied, *She will hatch with an ill grace out of her own nest.* On another occasion, when his adversaries gave him to understand that they were not sleeping, *I believe*

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[q] Thus Bartolomeo Scala, on a portrait of Cosmo, painted when he was young:

"Quæ vera est Cosmi facies, haud vera videtur;
"Dissimiles adeo longa senecta facit;
"Talis erat quondam, quem nunc perfectior ætas,
"Ex homine, incepit fingere velle deum."

Carm. illust. Poet. Ital. v. 8. *fl.* 489.

[r] *Mac. Ist. Fior. lib.* vii.

believe it, said Cosmo, *I have spoiled their sleep. —Of what colour is my hair?* said Cosmo, uncovering his head to the ambassadours of Venice who came with a complaint against the Florentines: *White*, they replied: *It will not be long*, said Cosmo, *before that of your senators will be so too.* Shortly before his death, his wife inquiring why he closed his eyes, *That I may perceive more clearly*, was his reply.

If, from considering the private character of Cosmo, we attend to his conduct as the moderator and director of the Florentine republick, our admiration of his abilities will increase with the extent of the theatre, upon which he had to act. So important were his mercantile concerns, that they often influenced in a very remarkable degree the politicks of Italy. When Alfonso king of Naples leagued with the Venetians against Florence, Cosmo called in such immense debts from those places, as deprived them of resources for carrying on the war[s]. During the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, one of his agents in England was resorted to by Edward IV. for a sum of money, which was accordingly furnished, to such an extraordinary

[s] *Mac. Ist. Fior. lib.* vii.

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extraordinary amount, that it might almost be considered as the means of supporting that monarch on the throne, and was repaid when his successes enabled him to fulfil his engagement[t]. The alliance of Cosmo was sedulously courted by the princes of Italy; and it was remarked, that by a happy kind of fatality, whoever united their interests with his, were always enabled either to repress, or to overcome their adversaries. By his assistance the republick of Venice resisted the united attacks of Filippo duke of Milan, and of the French nation; but when deprived of his support, the Venetians were no longer able to withstand their enemies. With

[t] La Maison de Medicis estoit la plus grande, que je croy que jamais ait esté au monde: car leurs serviteurs & facteurs ont eu tant de credit soups couleur de ce nom de Medicis, que ce seroit merveilles à croire à ce que j'en ay veu en Flandres & en Angleterre. J'en ai veu un appelé Guerard Quanvese presque etre occasion de soutenir le Roy Edouard le quart en son etat, estant guerre en son royaume d'Angleterre, & fournir par fois au dit roy plus de six vingt mille escus: où il fit peu de profit pour son maitre: toutes fois il recouvra ses pieces à la longue. Un autre ay vu nommé e appelé Thomas Portunary, estre pleige entre le dit roy Edouard & le duc Charles de Bourgogne, pour cinquante mille escus, & une autre fois en un lieu, pour quatre vingt mille.

Mem. de P. de Commines, ap. Fabr. in vitâ Laurentii, v. ii. *p.* 224.

With whatever difficulties Cosmo had to encounter, at home or abroad, they generally terminated in the acquisition of additional honour to his country and to himself. The esteem and gratitude of his fellow-citizens were fully shewn a short time before his death, when by a publick decree he was honoured with the title of *Pater Patriæ*, an appellation which was inscribed on his tomb, and which, as it was founded on real merit, has ever since been attached to the name of Cosmo de' Medici.

CHAP. II.

*EARLY accomplishments of Lorenzo—Education—Lorenzo visits different parts of Italy—Conduct of Piero—Conspiracy of Luca Pitti—Frustrated by Lorenzo—The exiles instigate the Venetians to attack the Florentines—Battle near Bologna—Piero promotes the interests of learning—Leo Battista Alberti—Cristoforo Landino—Piero patronises other eminent scholars—Giostra of Lorenzo and Giuliano—Poem of Luca Pulci—Poem of Angelo Politiano—*DISPUTATIONES CAMALDULENSES*—Lorenzo's description of his mistress—Sonnets in her praise—Lucretia Donati the object of his passion—Lorenzo marries Clarice Orsini—Visits the duke of Milan—Death of Piero de' Medici.*

CHAP. II.

LORENZO de' Medici was about sixteen years of age when Cosmo died, and had at that time given striking indications of extraordinary talents. From his earliest years he had exhibited proofs of a retentive and vigorous mind, which was cultivated, not only by all the attention which his father's infirmities would permit him to bestow, but by a frequent intercourse with his venerable grandfather. He owed also great obligations in this respect to his mother Lucretia, who was one of the most accomplished

Early accomplishments of Lorenzo.

1464.

CHAP. II. plished women of the age, and distinguished herself not only as a patroness of learning, but by her own writings. Of these some specimens yet remain, which are the more entitled to approbation, as they were produced at a time when poetry was at its lowest ebb in Italy[a]. The disposition of Lorenzo, which afterwards gave him a peculiar claim to the title of *magnificent*,

[a] Several of her *Laudi*, or hymns, are printed in the collection of sacred poems by the Medici family, published by *Cionacci* at Florence, 1680, and since reprinted at Bergamo in 1763; but a much more favourable specimen of her talents is given by *Crescimbeni*, (*Della volgar poesia*, *v.* iii. *p.* 277,) who is of opinion that she excelled the greater part of, not to say all, the poets of her time. Her versifications of scripture history, though never printed, are noticed by *Luigi Pulci*, in his *Morgante*, which poem he was induced to complete by her encouragement, and in which he thus adverts to the writings of his patroness.

" Quivi si legge della sua *Maria*
" La vita, ove il suo libro è sempre aperto;
" E di *Esdram* di *Judith* e di *Tobia*
" Quivi si rende giusto premio e merto;
" Quivi s'intende hor l'alta fantasia
" A descriver *Giovanni nel deserto*;
" Quivi cantano hor gli angeli i suoi versi,
" Dove il ver d' ogni cosa può vedersi."

Morgante. Ed. Ven. per Comin. de Trino, 1546.

cent, was apparent in his childhood. Having received as a present a horse from Sicily, he sent the donor in return a gift of much greater value; and on being reproved for his profuseness, he remarked that there was nothing more glorious than to overcome others in acts of generosity. Of his proficiency in classical learning, and the different branches of that philosophy which was then in repute, he has left indisputable proofs. Born to restore the lustre of his native tongue, he had rendered himself conspicuous by his poetical talents before he arrived at manhood. To these accomplishments he united a considerable share of strong natural penetration and good sense, which enabled him, amidst the many difficulties that he was involved in, to act with a promptitude and decision which surprised those who were witnesses of his conduct; whilst the endowments which entitled him to admiration and respect were accompanied by others that concilitated, in an eminent degree, the esteem and affection of his fellow-citizens. CHAP. II.

Tall in his stature, robust in his form, Lorenzo had in his person more the appearance of strength than of elegance. From his birth he laboured under some peculiar disadvantages; his sight was weak, his voice harsh and unpleasing,

CHAP. II.

ing, and he was totally deprived of the sense of smell[b]. With all these defects his countenance was dignified, and strongly indicated the magnanimity of his character; and the effects of his eloquence were conspicuous on many important occasions. In his youth he was much addicted to active and laborious exercises, to hawking, horsemanship, and country sports. Though not born to support a military character, he gave sufficient proofs of his courage, not only in publick tournaments, which were then not unfrequent in Italy, but also upon more trying occasions. Such was the versatility of his talents, that it is difficult to discover any department of business, or of amusement, of art, or of science, to which they were not at some time applied; and in whatever he undertook, he arrived at a proficiency which would seem to have required the labour of a life much longer than that which he was permitted to enjoy.

Education of Lorenzo.

Under the institution of Gentile d'Urbino, who afterwards, by the patronage of his pupil, became bishop of Arezzo, Lorenzo received the first rudiments of his education, and from the instructions of his tutor, aided perhaps by the

[b] *Valerius, in vitâ Laur. Med. p.* 9.

the exhortations of his pious mother, acquired that devotional temper which is so conspicuous in some of his writings[c]. This disposition was however only occasional, nor was the mind of Lorenzo overshaded with the habitual gloom of the professed devotee. In his hours of seriousness, or of sickness, the impressions made upon him by his early instructors became sufficiently apparent; but the vivacity of his temper often hurried him to a contrary extreme; and the levity, not to say the licentiousness, of some of his writings, is strikingly contrasted with the piety and seriousness of his other productions. The vigour of his intellect seems to have thrown an indiscriminate lustre on every object that presented itself. So various, yet so extensive were his

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[c] Valo dwells with apparent satisfaction on his early piety. "Audivi," says he "sæpius a Gentile ejus præceptore, cum quo et in Gallia, quum ibi legatum ageret, et in patria familiarissime vixi, Laurentium a latere suo discessisse nunquam. Die in Templo, donec res divina perageretur, permansisse semper: nocte etiam secum ire solitum ad divi Pauli societatem, quo conveniebant plurimi, Immortali Deo in sobrietate et vigiliis ac precibus gratias agentes: obvios Christi pauperculos eleemosynis prosequi ad unum omnes; nihil in eo puerile, nihil delicatum apparuisse."

Val. in vitâ Laur. p. 5.

CHAP. II. his powers, that they are scarcely reconcileable to that consistency of character with which the laws of human nature seldom dispense[d].

In superintending the subsequent progress of Lorenzo, several other persons eminent for their learning concurred. In the year 1457, Cristoforo Landino was appointed by the magistracy of Florence to the office of publick professor of poetry and rhetorick in that city, and was soon afterwards intrusted by Piero de' Medici with the instruction of his two sons. Between Landino and his pupil Lorenzo a reciprocal attachment took place; and such was the opinion that the master entertained of the judgment of his scholar, that he is said frequently to have submitted his various and learned works to his perusal and correction.

[d] This peculiarity in the character of Lorenzo was not unobserved by his contemporaries. "Jam vero quo "unquam in homine tam diversæ inter se fuerunt partes "virtutum maximarum? Quid enim longius abest "quam a gravitate facilitas? Quis tamen te constan- "tior? Contra vero quis clementior aut lenior? Quid "tam mirabile quam magnitudinem istam animi huma- "nitatis condimentis temperari?" &c. *Pauli Cortesii Ep. ad Laur. Med. ad. Dial. de Hominibus doctis Præf. Ed. Flor.* 1734. vide et *Val. in vitâ Laur. p.* 14.

tion[e]. In the Greek language, in ethicks, and in the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy, Lorenzo had the advantage of the precepts of the learned Argyropylus[f], and in those of the Platonick sect he was sedulously instructed by Marsilio Ficino, for whom he retained through life an unalterable friendship. But for many of his accomplishments he was not indebted to any preceptor. That exquisite taste in poetry, in musick, and in every department of the fine arts, which enabled him to contribute so powerfully towards their restoration, was an endowment of nature, the want of which no education could have supplied.

CHAP. II.

With such qualifications, Lorenzo, soon after the death of his grandfather, entered on the stage of publick life; for it was the laudable custom of the Florentines early to habituate their youth to serious and important occupations.

1465.

[e] *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 183.

[f] Argyropylus Byzantius insigni fuit et auctoritate et gratia apud Cosmum Medicem, hujus filium Petrum, nepotemque Laurentium, quem non modo Græcis literis sed et dialecticis imbuit, eaque philosophiæ parte qua de moribus præcipitur. *Politian. in Proem. ad Miscell.*

CHAP. II.

tions. Besides, the infirmities of Piero de' Medici rendered such a coadjutor as Lorenzo was likely to prove, of great importance to him. His domestick education being therefore completed, his father judged it expedient for him to visit some of the principal courts of Italy; not so much for the purpose of gratifying an idle curiosity, as to conciliate, by a personal intercourse, the friendship of those with whom he was in future to maintain a correspondence on matters of great moment, and to inform himself of such local circumstances as might enable him to transact the affairs of the republick with every possible advantage. In the year 1465, he had an interview at Pisa with the son of Ferdinand king of Naples, Federigo, who after the death of his eldest brother Alfonso, and his nephew Federigo, succeeded to the crown. The prince was then on his journey to Milan, to escort Ippolita, the daughter of Francesco Sforza, from thence to Naples, where she was to marry his elder brother Alfonso, duke of Calabria[g]. At this interview some instances of mutual respect and attachment took place between Federigo and Lorenzo, which we shall hereafter have occasion to relate.

In

[g] *Muratori, Annali d'Italia, v.* ix. *p.* 493.

In the following year Lorenzo made a visit to Rome, where he was kindly received by Paul II. one of the most arrogant pontiffs that ever sat in the chair of St. Peter. A few months afterwards he proceeded through Bologna and Ferrara to Venice, and thence to Milan. During his absence he had frequent letters from his father, several of which yet remain, and sufficiently evince the confidence that Piero placed in his son, with whom he enters into a detail of all political occurrences, and to whom he transmits such letters of importance as were received on publick affairs during his absence[h]. That the respect paid by Piero to the judgment of Lorenzo did not arise from a blind partiality, may appear from the intercourse that already subsisted between Lorenzo and some of the most celebrated scholars of the age; several of whom, on his occasional absence from Florence, addressed themselves to him by letter, as their acknowledged patron and warmest friend[i].

CHAP. II.

The

[h] *Appx. No.* VIII.

[i] Some specimens of these, which have been preserved in the *Palazzo Vecchio* at Florence, and not before published, are given in the Appendix, No. IX. The first is an extract of an Italian letter from the celebrated Luigi Pulci, the author of the Morgante, and is as strongly marked

CHAP. II.

Conduct of Piero de' Medici.

The death of Pius II. who had preceded Paul II. in the pontifical chair, happened a few days after that of Cosmo de' Medici, and not long afterwards died Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, who had governed that state with great ability for the space of sixteen years[k]. This event

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marked by affection for Lorenzo, as by the whimsical peculiarities of its author's character. The second is from Peregrino Allio, whose Latin Poems in the *Carmina Illust. Poet.* v. i. *p.* 12. are a better testimony of his abilities than the exaggerated account of *Negri* (*Scrittori Fiorentini*, *p.* 450.) "Fu mostrato non dato al mondo "questo mostro d' ingegno e di memoria; affinche si "vedesse che nel secolo de' Ficini, de' Mirandolani, de' "Benevieni, de' Barbari, de' Poliziani, ingegni tutti "portentosi e grandissimi, poteva ancora far qualche "cosa di piu marvaglioso la natura." This author is mistaken in placing the death of Allio in 1458, although the accurate Bandini has in this instance adopted his authority. (*Negri*, 450. *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. p.* 204.) I have before cited the epitaph by Allio on John de' Medici, the son of Cosmo, who died in 1463; and amongst the letters which I have procured from the *Palazzo Vecchio*, is one from him to Lorenzo, dated the 25th of may 1466. That he died young may however be inferred from Verini. (*De illustr. Urbis*, *p.* 34.)

"Te pariter juvenem tetricæ rapuere sorores:
"Aequasses priscos, Alli Peregrine, poetas."

[k] The Sforza were a family of adventurers. Sforza degli Attendogli, the father of Francesco, from the condition

event gave no small alarm to Piero de' Medici, whose family had long supported a close intimacy with that of Sforza, from which they had mutually derived important advantages. Lorenzo was then at Rome, where his father addressed to him several letters, in some of which his anxiety for the peaceable establishment of the widow and children of Francesco in the government of Milan is strongly expressed. By the death of so many of the Italian princes within so short a space of time, the minds of men began to be turned towards new commotions, particularly in Florence, where the bodily imbecility

tion of a peasant, acquired such a high degree of military reputation, as enabled his son, who was also a soldier of fortune, to obtain in marriage the daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti, duke of Milan, and the Milanese territory, at that period one of the most extensive in Italy, as her portion. According to tradition, Sforza was employed in turning the soil, when he was invited by some of his companions to enter into the army. His determination was a matter of difficulty, for the solution of which he resorted to his spade.—Throwing it into an oak, he declared that if it fell to the ground he would continue his labours, if it hung in the tree he would pursue his fortunes. (*Murat. Ann. vol.* ix. *p.* 2.) He became the father of a line of princes who were regarded as the most splendid sovereigns of Italy, and formed alliances with the chief families in Europe.

CHAP. II.

imbecility of Piero gave grounds to hope that a vigorous attempt to deprive the house of Medici of its influence might be crowned with success. Nor was the conduct of Piero, on his succession to the immense inheritance of his father, calculated to strengthen the friendship of those whom Cosmo had attached to his interest. Apprehensive that his commercial concerns were too widely extended, and prompted by the treacherous advice of Dietisalvo Neroni, a man of ability and intrigue, who owed his fortunes to the protection and generosity of Cosmo, he began indiscriminately to collect the sums of money which his father had advanced to the citizens of Florence. The result was such as Neroni expected. Those who were friends of the father became enemies of the son; and had not Piero discovered the snare, and desisted from such rigorous proceedings, he might too late have found, that in supporting the character of the merchant, he had forgotten that of the statesman.

Conspiracy of Luca Pitti.

1466.

Amongst the number of opulent and aspiring citizens who had reluctantly submitted to the superiour talents of Cosmo de' Medici, was Luca Pitti, whose name has been transmitted to posterity as the founder of the magnificent palace which has for some centuries been the residence

residence of the sovereigns of Tuscany. The death of Cosmo, and the infirmities of Piero, afforded an opportunity that Luca conceived to be highly favourable to his ambitious purposes[1]. Having formed a combination with the powerful family of the Acciajuoli, he attempted, in conjunction with them, to supplant the authority and destroy the influence of the Medici, with the magistrates and council of Florence. Being defeated in their exertions, they resorted to more violent methods, and resolved upon the assassination of Piero de' Medici; believing, that if they could succeed in such a project, his sons were too young to occasion any formidable opposition to their views. Debilitated by the gout, Piero was generally carried in a chair by his domesticks from his house at Careggi to his residence at Florence. Having received intimation of an intended commotion, and being alarmed at the sudden approach of Ercole d'Este, brother of Borso, marquis of Ferrara, whom the conspirators had engaged to enter the territories of the republick, at the head of 1300 cavalry, he conceived his presence to be necessary in Florence, and accordingly set out from Careggi, accompanied only by a few attendants.

CHAP. II.

[1] *Amm. Ist. Fior.* v. iii. *p.* 93.

CHAP. II.

ants[m]. Lorenzo, who had left Careggi a short time before his father, was surprized to find the road to the city beset by armed men, and immediately suspecting their purpose, despatched one of his followers to him with directions to proceed by a more retired and circuitous path, whilst taking himself the direct road, he informed those who inquired with apparent anxiety for his father, that he was following at a short distance; by which means Lorenzo rescued his father from the impending danger, and gave a striking proof of that promptitude of mind which so eminently distinguished him on many subsequent occasions.

The suspicions that fell upon Luca Pitti and his party, induced the conspirators to abandon their design of open violence; and the intrigues of the politician were again substituted for the dagger of the assassin. Encouraged by the support of the marquis of Ferrara, they daily increased in numbers and audacity, but when an open contest between the opposite parties was hourly expected, and the citizens apprehended a renewal of those sanguinary commotions, from which, under the guidance of the Medici, they had

[m] *Val. in vitâ Laur. p.* 10.

had been a long time exempted, Luca suddenly withdrew himself from his party, and effected a reconciliation with the Medici. Several of the malecontents followed his example, and their desertion gave a decided superiority to the cause of Piero, which was also most opportunely strengthened by the appearance of a body of two thousand Milanese troops, that kept in awe the army of the insurgents, and frustrated the hopes founded on its assistance. The friends of the Medici failed not to take advantage of this favourable concurrence; Piero Acciajuoli and his two sons, Dietisalvo Neroni, and two of his brothers, and Niccolo Soderini, with his son Geri, were declared enemies of the state, and condemned to banishment[n]. The archbishop of Florence, who had taken a decided part against the Medici, retired to Rome. A few other citizens, unable to support their disgrace, adopted a voluntary exile; but the kindness of Lorenzo allayed the apprehensions of the greater part of the conspirators, and rendered them in future more favourable to his interests.—*He only knows how to conquer*, said Lorenzo, *who knows how to forgive*[o].

CHAP. II.

Though

[n] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *p.* 99.

[o] *Val. in vitâ, p.* 11. *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 22.

CHAP. II.

Though exempted from the fate of the other leaders of the faction, Luca experienced a punishment of a more galling and disgraceful kind. From the high estimation in which he had before been held, he fell into the lowest state of degradation. The progress of his magnificent palace was stopped; the populace who had formerly vied with each other in giving assistance, refused any longer to labour for him; many opulent citizens, who had contributed costly articles and materials, demanded them back, alleging that they were only lent. The remainder of his days was passed in obscurity and neglect, but the extensive mansion which his pride had planned, still remains to give celebrity to his name[p].

The

[p] It is deserving of remark that Machiavelli is mistaken not only in the period he assigns for the commencement of this building, but in the motives that led to it. After relating the successful interposition of Luca Pitti in the affairs of the republick, in the year 1453, by which he rose to great eminence, and obtained a reward from his fellow-citizens, which was supposed to amount to 20,000 ducats, he adds, (*Hist. lib.* vii.) "Donde egli "salì in tanta riputatione che non Cosimo ma Messer "Luca la Città governava. Da che egli venne in tanta "confidanza, ch' egli incominciò due edificii, l'uno a "Firenze, l'altro a Ruciano, luogo propinquo un miglio "alla

CHAP. II.

Frustrated by Lorenzo.

The defection of Luca Pitti, and the consequent establishment of the authority of the Medici in Florence, have been uniformly attributed by the Florentine historians to the abilities and prudence of Lorenzo; who, instead of resorting to forcible opposition, employed his own eloquence, and the influence of his friends, in subduing the resentment of his adversaries, and particularly of Luca Pitti, whose versatile disposition fluctuated a long time between the remonstrances of his associates, and the pacifick representations of Lorenzo. A short time previous to this contest, Lorenzo had paid a visit to Naples,

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" alla città, tutti superbi et regii; ma quello della Città " al tutto maggiore che alcun' altro che da privato citta- " dino fino à quel giorno fusse stato edificato." It is however certain, that both these places were designed, and in part executed, by Filippo Brunelleschi, who died in 1446, seven years before the event related by Machiavelli took place. *(Vasari in vita di Filippo.)* " Ordinò " ancor Filippo à M. Luca Pitti, fuor della porta à " S. Niccolo di Fiorenza, in un luogo detto Ruciano un " ricco e magnifico palazzo; ma non già à gran pezza " simile à quello che per lo medesimo cominciò in Fi- " renze, e condusse al secondo finestrato, con tanta gran- " dezza et magnificenza, che d' opera Toscana, non si " è ancor veduta il più raro, ne il più magnifico." This palace was afterwards purchased by Leonora of Toledo, wife of Cosmo I. duke of Florence, and was completed under the directions of Bartolomeo Ammanati.

CHAP. II. Naples, probably with a view of influencing the king to countenance his cause, in case the dissensions at Florence, which were then a subject of alarm, should terminate in an open rupture. The magnanimity of his conduct, as well in defeating this formidable conspiracy, as in his lenity towards his enemies, extended his reputation throughout Italy. No sooner was the result known at Naples, than Ferdinando addressed to him a letter strongly expressive of admiration and esteem; which being the testimony of a monarch whose character for sagacity and political knowledge was superiour to that of any other potentate in Europe, must have been highly gratifying to the youthful ambition of Lorenzo[q]. The success of Lorenzo in this critical business increased also the confidence which his father had before placed in him, and from this time he was intrusted with a considerable share in the conduct of the republick, as well as in the management of the extensive private concerns of the family. But if the prudence of Lorenzo was conspicuous in defeating his adversaries, it was more so in the use he made of his victory. He well knew that humanity and sound policy are inseparable, and either did

[q] This letter will be found in App. No. X.

did not feel, or wisely suppressed, that vindictive spirit which civil contests seldom fail to excite. CHAP. II.

"I have heard from my brother Filippo," says Valori, "that upon his introducing to Lorenzo, "for the purpose of reconciliation, Antonio "Tebalducci, who had by different means "attempted his ruin, Lorenzo, observing that "my brother hesitated in requesting his indul- "gence towards an avowed enemy, said to him "with great kindness, *I should owe you no obliga-* "*tion, Filippo, for introducing to me a friend;* "*but by converting an enemy into a friend, you* "*have done me a favour, which I hope you will* "*as often as possible repeat.*"

The exiled party, which consisted principally of men of abilities and intrigue, soon began to stir up new commotions. But Agnolo Acciajuoli, who had retreated only to Sienna, was desirous, before he engaged in further opposition, of trying whether a reconciliation with the Medici yet remained practicable. His letter to Piero on this subject, and the answer it occasioned, are yet extant[r]. Many of the other conspirators

The exiles instigate the Venetians to attack the Florentines.

[r] Machiavelli informs us that Agnolo withdrew to Naples, and professes to cite the particulars of the letters between him and Piero. The accuracy of this historian may

CHAP. II.

conspirators retired to Venice, where they exerted their utmost endeavours to exasperate that formidable state against their countrymen. This attempt might have failed of success, had they not, in seeking to gratify their private resentment, flattered the ambitious aims of the Venetians on the rest of Italy. With this view they insinuated to the senate, that the support given by the Florentines, under the influence of Cosmo de' Medici, to Francesco Sforza, had enabled him to defend his states against their pretensions, and prevented their possessing themselves of all Lombardy. These representations had their full effect. Under the command of Bartolomeo Coglione, one of the most celebrated commanders of the time, a considerable army was collected for the purpose of attacking the states of Florence. Several of the Italian princes joined in person the standard of Bartolomeo, and amongst others Ercole d'Este, Alessandro Sforza prince of Pesaro, the lords of Forli, of Faenza, and Mirandula; insomuch that this army was not more formidable for its numbers,

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may appear by comparing the authentick letters published in the Appendix, from the collection of Fabroni, with the recital of them by Machiavelli in the 7th book of his history. *App. No.* XI.

numbers, than respectable for the rank and the talents of its leaders. CHAP. II.

Nor were the Florentines in the mean time ignorant of the intended hostilities, or inattentive to their own defence. Besides the support derived from the duke of Milan, the king of Naples sent his son Federigo with a powerful reenforcement to their assistance. Galeazzo, the young duke of Milan, joined the army in person, as did also Giovanni Bentivoglio, prince of Bologna; and the command of the whole was intrusted to Federigo count of Urbino[s], whose character as a soldier was not inferiour to that of Coglione. The adverse forces approached each other near Bologna, but no great alacrity was shewn on either side to begin the engagement. Wearied with apprehensions, and sinking under the expense of supporting so numerous an army, the Florentines began to complain of the indecisive conduct of their general, which they at length understood was chiefly

Battle near Bologna.

[s] "Principe di accorgimento e di valore non ordi-
" nario; per cui da tutti i più potenti sovrani d' Italia,
" era a gara richiesto per condurre le loro truppe, e
" accolto co' i più singolari onori."

Tirab. Storia della Lett. Ital. v. vi. *parte* i. *p.* 13.

CHAP. II. chiefly to be attributed to the duke of Milan, who reserving to himself great authority, and having little experience in military affairs, threw continual obstacles in the way of the chief commander. A message was therefore despatched to the duke, requesting his presence in Florence, where he soon after arrived, and took up his residence in the palace of the Medici[t]. The count of Urbino being freed from this restraint, or having no apology for longer delay, attacked the advanced guard of the enemy, under the command of Alessandro Sforza. The engagement soon became general, and continued from noon till evening. Machiavelli assures us, that at the close of the battle both parties kept the field, that not a soldier lost his life, and that only a few horses were wounded, and some prisoners taken; but historians of more veracity have given a different relation[u]. It

1467.

[t] L' anno 1467 di Luglio, ci venne il duca Galeazzo di Milano, ch' era in campo contro Bartolomeo da Bergamo, in Romagna, che vessava lo stato nostro, e alloggiò in casa nostra, che cosi volle, benchè dalla signoria gli fusse stato apparecchiato in Santa Maria novella.

Ricordi di Lorenzo, in Appi. No. XII.

[u] Platina, (I quote the Italian translation,) in reference to this battle, says, " Quelli, ch' in questa batta-" glia si retrovarono, dicono che nel età nostra la mag-" gior

It is however certain, that no important consequences resulted from a contest that had excited so much expectation. The troops shortly afterwards withdrew into their winter quarters, which afforded the Florentines an opportunity, by the mediation of the marquis of Ferrara, of negotiating for a peace. This was accordingly effected without any stipulation being introduced on the part of the exiles; and thus the storm which seemed for a while to threaten the destruction of the Florentine state, after having been repressed in its first fury, gradually abated, and at length settled in a perfect calm. CHAP. II.

Piero promotes the interests of learning.

Although Piero de' Medici was inferiour in talents both to his father Cosmo and his son Lorenzo, yet he gave repeated proofs of a strong attach-

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" gior non si vedesse, e vi morirono molti." (*Plat. v.* i. *p.* 448. *Ven.* 1774.) And Ammirato expressly informs us, in direct contradiction to Machiavelli, who, says he, " schernendo, come egli suol far, quella milizia, dice che " non vi morì niuno," that both armies fought with great courage; that according to the most moderate accounts 300 men and 400 horses were killed; that another account stated the loss at 800, and another at 1000 men. He also cites the Venetian history of Sabellico, who denominates this a very bloody engagement. " Così," says he, " siamo trascurati à saper la verità ' delle cose." *Amm. v.* iii. *p.* 102.

CHAP. II. attachment to the cause of letters, and continued an hereditary protection to those men of learning who, under the patronage of his father, had arisen in, or been attracted to Florence. In the year 1441 he had been engaged in promoting a literary contest in that city, by proposing a premium for the best poem on a given subject. The reward of the victor was to be a coronet of silver imitating a laurel wreath. The secretaries of the pope were appointed to decide upon the merits of the candidates. Splendid preparations were made. Several competitors appeared, and publickly recited their poems; but the laudable intentions of Piero were defeated by the folly or the knavery of the ecclesiasticks, who gave the prize to the church of S. Maria, pretending that the merits of the pieces were so nearly equal that a decision was impossible. This absurd determination occasioned great dissatisfaction to the Florentines, and was probably considered not only as obliquely satirizing the candidates, but the city itself[v].

The

[v] These poems are however yet preserved in the Laurentian library, PLUT. xc. cod. xxxviii. The subject is *Friendship*. The derided candidates were Michele di Noferi, Francesco Altobianco, Antonio Allio, afterwards

Leo Battista Alberti.

The coadjutor of Piero de' Medici on this occasion was the celebrated Leo Battista Alberti, who, independent of his extraordinary talents as an artist, deserves particular notice as one of the earliest scholars that appeared in the revival of letters[w]. He first distinguished himself by his Latin comedy entitled *Philodoxios*, copies of which he distributed amongst his friends, as the work of Lepidus, an ancient Roman poet. The literati were effectually deceived, and bestowed the highest applauses upon a piece which they conceived to be a precious remnant of antiquity.

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wards bishop of Fiesole, Mariotto Davanzati, Anselmo Calderoni, and Francesco Malecarni. Pozzetti, somewhat unfortunately, denominates this contest *The triumph of literature. (v. L. B. Alberti, laud. a Pompilio Pozzetti*, 4to. *Flor.* 1789.)

[w] Alberti was of a noble family of Florence, but was born at Venice in 1404. In his youth he was remarkable for his agility, strength, and skill in bodily exercises. An unquenchable thirst of knowledge possessed him from his earliest years. In the learned languages he made a speedy and uncommon proficiency, and had perhaps a more general acquaintance with the sciences than any man of that age. Of all the fine arts he had a thorough and practical knowledge; and as a painter, a sculptor, but particularly as an architect, obtained no small share of celebrity.

Vasari, vita di Alberti. L. B. Abl. laud. à Pozzetti, ut supr.

CHAP. II. antiquity. It first appeared about the year 1425, when the rage for ancient manuscripts was at its height, and Lepidus for a while took his rank with Plautus and with Terence[x]. As Alberti advanced in years, he turned his attention to practical knowledge, and the present times are indebted to him for many useful and amusing inventions[y]. In his Latin treatises, which have been translated into Italian by Cosimo Bartoli, and published under the name of

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[x] This piece was written by Alberti during the confinement of sickness, occasioned by too close an application to study. It was printed in the succeeding century by the younger Aldo Manutio, who had procured a manuscript copy, and not aware of the deception, gravely confesses in the proem his ignorance of *Lepidus* the Roman poet.

[y] On the authority of Vasari we may attribute to Alberti the discovery of the *Camera oscura*, though that invention is generally given to Giambattista Porta in the succeeding century. "L'anno 1437 trovò per via d'uno "strumento il modo di lucidare le prospettive naturali et "diminuire le figure, &c. (*Vasari, in vita di Alberti, da Bottari, Fir.* 1771.) The invention of the optical machine for exhibiting drawings so as to imitate nature, is indisputably due to him. "Opera ex ipsa arte pingendi "effecit inaudita, et spectatoribus incredibilia, quæ quidam parva in capsa conclusa pusillum per foramen "ostenderet. Vidisses illic montes maximos," &c.

Alb. vita, ab Anonymo. ap. Vasari. ut sup.

of *Opuscoli Morali*, he appears as an author on a great variety of subjects, but he is better known by his treatise on architecture, which has been translated into many languages. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that Alberti made an attempt to reconcile the measure of the Latin distich with the genius of his native tongue, in which he has been followed by Claudio Tolomei, and other writers[z]. CHAP. II.

The reputation of Alberti as an architect, though it deservedly stands high in the estimation of posterity, must however be considered as inferiour to that of Filippo Brunelleschi, who is the true father of the art in modern times. Vasari expresses his disapprobation of some part of the labours of Alberti. His paintings were not numerous, nor on a large scale; nor did

[z] Of this Vasari has preserved the following specimen:

"Questa per estrema miserabile pistola mando,
"A te, che spregi miseramente noi."

Some of the sonnets of Alberti are yet extant, and are printed with those of Burchiello, with whom he seems to have been on terms of intimacy; and Pozzetti, who has lately favoured the publick with a very full account of this extraordinary man, has also pointed out several of his poetical pieces, which are yet preserved in different libraries of Italy.

CHAP. II. did he in this branch of art arrive at great practical perfection, which, as Vasari observes, is not much to be wondered at, as his time was mostly devoted to other studies. His principal merit is certainly to be sought for in his useful discoveries, and his preceptive writings. He was the first author who attempted practical treatises on the arts of design, all of which, but more particularly his treatise on architecture, are allowed to exhibit a profound knowledge of his subject, and will long continue to do honour to his memory.

Cristoforo Landino.

Had all the other professors of letters been silent as to the merits of Piero de' Medici, the applauses bestowed on him by Cristoforo Landino, would alone be sufficient to rescue his memory from neglect. Landino had indeed every motive of gratitude to the family of his patron. He was born a Florentine, and being early disgusted with the study of the civil law, devoted himself to that of poetry and polite letters. In pursuing his inclinations he had the good fortune to find the road that led him to honour and to affluence. The bounty of a private friend supported him through the early part of his education, to which the finances of his family were inadequate, and the munificence of Cosmo de' Medici completed what the kind-

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ness of Angelo da Todi had begun. His proficiency in the Greek language was remarkable, even at a period when the study of it was in its highest vigour, and immediately supplied from its native fountain. The philosophy of Aristotle, and the dogmas of the stoicks, had early engaged his attention; but from his intercourse with the Medici, and his intimacy with Ficino, he afterwards became a decided partisan of the new philosophy, and was among the few learned men whom Ficino thought proper to consult on his translation of the works of Plato. The Latin elegies of Landino[a] bear ample testimony to the virtues, the liberality, and the accomplishments of Piero de' Medici, whom he constantly honours with the appellation of his Mecenas, and seems to have selected from the other individuals of that illustrious family, as the object of his particular affection and veneration. CHAP. II.

If we consider the numerous testimonies that remain of the liberality of Piero de' Medici to Piero patronises other eminent scholars.

[a] To these poems Landino prefixed the name of *Xandra*, being the diminutive of *Alessandra*, the appellation of his poetical mistress. This work has not been published; but the Canonico Bandini has given us some extracts from it in his *Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 110, &c. The prefatory verses to his second book, addressed to Piero de Medici, are given in the Appendix, No. XIII.

CHAP. II. to men of learning, and advert at the same time to the infirm state of his health, and the short period during which he enjoyed the direction of the republick, we shall not hesitate in allotting to him a distinguished rank amongst the early promoters of letters. To Piero, Benedetto Accolti addressed, in terms of high commendation, his history of the wars between the christians and the infidels[b], a work of considerable historical credit, and which, in the succeeding century, served as a guide to Torquato Tasso, in his immortal poem the *Gerusalemme liberata*[c]. An

[b] This work, written in Latin, was first printed at Venice in 1532; again, at Basil, 1544, and at Florence, 1623; the last-mentioned edition being accompanied by the annotations of Thomas Dempster, a Scotchman, and professor of humanity in the college of Bologna. It was translated into Greek by Irone Ducas, and printed at Paris in 1620; and into Italian by Francesco Baldelli, and published by Giolito at Venice in 1549.

Zeno. Diss. Voss. v. i. fl. 163.

[c] Accolti is not less celebrated as a civilian than as a polite scholar. He was born at Arezzo in 1415, whence his usual appellation of Benedetto Aretino. Having been sent on an embassy from that place to Florence, he took up his residence there, and in the year 1459 succeeded Poggio Bracciolini as secretary to the republick, in which office he continued till his death, in 1466. Besides his history, he is the author of a dialogue, entitled,

CHAP. II.

An uninterrupted friendship subsisted between Piero and the celebrated Donato Acciajuoli, who inscribed to him several of his learned works[d]. The Laurentian library contains many similar instances of the gratitude and observance of the scholars of the time. Amongst those deserving of more particular notice is Francesco Ottavio, who dedicated to Piero his poem *De cætu poetarum*, in which he hesitates not to represent his patron as surpassing the example of his father, in his attention to the cause of literature, and in his kindness to its professors[e].

Giostra of Lorenzo and Giuliano.

No sooner was the city of Florence restored to peace, and the dread of a foreign enemy removed, than the natural disposition of the inhabitants for splendid exhibitions began to revive. Amongst other amusements, a tournament

1468.

tled *De præstantia virorum sui ævi*, inscribed to Cosmo de' Medici, which was first printed in 1689. Paulo Cortesi, a severe censor, allows that his history is a work of great industry, and that it throws considerable light on a very difficult subject.

Zeno. Diss. Voss. v. i. *p.* 164. *Cortes. de hom. doct. p.* 22.

[d] *Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. v.* ii. *p.* 554. 748.

[e] This poem is published in the *Carmina Illustr. Poetar. Ital. v.* vii. *p.* 1.

CHAP. II.

ment was held, in which Lorenzo de' Medici bore away the prize, being a helmet of silver, with a figure of Mars as the crest. In another encounter Giuliano had equal success with his brother. These incidents are the more entitled to our notice, as they have given rise to two of the most celebrated Italian poems of the fifteenth century, the *Giostra of Lorenzo de' Medici*, by Luca Pulci, and the *Giostra of Giuliano de' Medici*, by Angelo Politiano.

At what particular time these events took place, and whether the two brothers signalized themselves on the same, or on different occasions, has been rendered doubtful by the inattention and discordant relations of different writers, who have directly or incidentally adverted to this subject. Amongst these, Machiavelli has misinformed[f], and Paulus Jovius confused his readers.

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[f] If we believe Machiavelli, this exhibition took place in 1465, (at which time Lorenzo was only seventeen years of age,) and was intended merely to turn the attention of the people from the affairs of state. "Per tor "via adunque questo otio, e dare che pensare à gli huo- "mini qualche cosa che levassero i pensieri dello stato, "sendo già passato l' anno che Cosimo era morto, pre- "sero occasione, da che fusse bene rallegrar la città, e "ordinarono due feste (secondo l' altre che in quella "città

readers[r]. Of the authors who have followed them, some have employed themselves in comparing

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" città si fanno) solennissime. Una che rappresentava " quando i tre magi vennero d' oriente dietro alla stella " che dimostrava la natività di Christo; la quale era di " tanta pompa et si magnifica, che in ordinarla e farla, " teneva più mesi occupata tutta la città. L' altra fù " uno torniamento dove i primi giovani della città si esser- " citarono insieme coi più nominati cavallieri d' Italia; " e tra i giovani fiorentini il più riputato fu Lorenzo, " primo genito di Piero, il quale non per gratia, ma per " proprio suo valore ne riportò il primo honore."

Mac. Hist. lib. vii.

r In his elogies Jovius adverts to the Giostra of Lorenzo, as prior to that of Giuliano. " Politianus à " prima statim juventa admirabilis ingenii nomen adeptus " est: cum novo illustrique poemate, Juliani Medicis " equestres ludos celebrasset; Luca Pulcio nobili poeta " omnium confessione superato, qui Laurentii fratris " ludicrum equestris pugnæ spectaculum, iisdem modis " et numeris decantarat," &c. *In Elog. vir. doct.* But in his life of Leo X. he directly contradicts his own evidence. Speaking of the tournament of Guiliano, he says: " Ejus gloriosi laboris præmium fuit triumphus Politiani " divini poetæ carminibus celebratus. Nec multo post " Laurentius, ut fraternis laudibus æquaretur, novum " spectaculum periculosissimæ pugnæ edidit. Hujus " quoque speciocissimi certaminis memoriam Pulcius " ipse, Politiani æmulus, perjucundo edito poemate sem- " piternam fecit."

Jovius, in vitâ Leonis X. *lib* i.

CHAP. II. paring or contesting these various authorities[h], whilst others have gone a step further, and ingrafted their own absurdities on the errors of their predecessors[i]. Even amongst those who are entitled to a greater share of attention, Fabroni has decided wrong[k], and Menckenius, after a full inquiry into all previous testimony, confesses his inability to decide at all[l]. In solving this difficulty it might have been expected that recourse would have been had, in the first instance, to the internal evidence of the poems themselves, by which all doubts on the

[h] Bayle cites these different passages of Jovius, but, as usual, leaves his reader to form his own judgment upon them. *Dict. Hist. Art. Politien.* Vide *Boissardum in Elog. vir. doct. & Jo. Mich. Brutum in Hist. Flor. lib.* ii. *ap. Bayle.*

[i] Varillas and Baillet. The former of whom gives an account of the poem of Politiano, sufficiently absurd to afford amusement to the reader, the substance of which has been adopted by the latter. *Anec. de Flor. p.* 194. *Jugemens de Sœvans, v.* i. *p.* 29.

[k] Fabroni places this event before the conspiracy of Luca Pitti, and the attempt on the life of Piero de' Medici. *Laur. Med. vita, v.* i. *p.* 20.

[l] "Scriptorem qui hunc exsolvat nodum, ego quidem "scio nullum. Certi adeo hac in re nihil definire audeo," &c. *Menck. in vita Politiani, p.* 44.

the subject would have been effectually removed; but Menckenius had never seen even the poem of Politiano, though it is of much more common occurrence than that of Pulci[m]; and Fabroni, with the poem of Pulci before him, has suffered himself to be betrayed into an anachronism by the authority of Machiavelli. In the poem last mentioned, not only the year, but the precise day on which the tournament of Lorenzo took place, is particularly specified. This appears to have been the seventh of February 1468[n], at which time he was in his twentieth year, to which the poet also expressly adverts[o] as well as

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[m] "Compertum mihi est per Italos mei studiosis-
"simos, atque hujus carminis probe gnaros, duobus illud
"libris distingui, nec ad finem perductum esse alterum,"
&c. *Menck. in vitâ Pol. p.* 43.

[n] "L' anno correva mille quattro cento
"Et sessant'octo dall' incarnazione,
"Et ordinossi per mezzo Gennaio,
"Ma il septimo dì fessi di Febraio."

Giostra di Lor.

It must be observed that the year, according to the Florentine computation, did not terminate till the 25th day of March.

[o] "Ch' era al principio del ventesimo anno,
"Quando e' fu paziente à tanto affanno."

Ibid.

CHAP. II. as to the attack lately made upon the Florentines by Bartolomeo Coglione, called of Bergamo[p]. The circumstance that gave rise to this solemnity was the marriage of Braccio Martello, an intimate friend of Lorenzo[q]. The second prize of honour was adjudged to Carlo Borromei[r]. At this time Giuliano was only in his fifteenth year; but he made his appearance on horseback among the combatants[s], and obtained a prize during the same festival; it being evident from the poem of Pulci, that he was to try his courage on

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[p] "Ma poi che in tutto fu l'orgoglio spento
"Del furor bergamasco: al fier leone
"Venne la palma, et ciascun fu contento
"Di far la giostra nel suo antico agone."
Giostra di Lor.

[q] "E' si faceva le nozze in Fiorenza
"Qando al ciel piacque, di Braccio Martello,
"Giovane ornata di tanta eccellenza
"Ch'io non saprei chi comparare à quello," &c.
Ibid.

[r] "Trassonsi gli elmi i giostranti di testa
"E posto fine à si lungo martoro;
"Fu data il giovinetto con gran festo
"Il primo honor di Marte, con l' alloro,
"Et l' altro a Carlo Borromei si resta."
Ibid.

[s] "Poi seguitava il suo fratel Giuliano,
"Sopra un destrier tutto d' acciaio coperto."

on a future day[t]. The poem of Politiano contains also sufficient proof that the tournament of Giuliano is to be placed at no very distant period from that of Lorenzo, as it appears Lorenzo was not then married, although that event took place within a few months after he had signalized himself in this contest[u]. If further confirmation were necessary, it may be found in the Ricordi of Lorenzo, who defrayed the expense of this exhibition, which cost ten thousand florins, and was held in the place of S. Croce. In this authentick document Lorenzo speaks with becoming modesty of these his youthful achievements[v]. CHAP. II.

It must be confessed that the poem of Pulci derives its merit rather from the minute information Poem of Luca Pulci.

[t] " Digli, che sono per Giuliano certi squilli
" Che deston come Carnasciale il corno,
" Il suo cor magno all' aspettata giostra;
" Ultima gloria di Fiorenza nostra."
Giostra di Lor. in fine.

[u] *Giostra di Giuliano de' Med. lib.* ii. *stan.* 4.

[v] *Ric. di Lor. in App. No.* XII.

CHAP. II. mation it gives us respecting this exhibition, than from its poetical excellence[w]. A considerable part of it is employed in describing the preparations for the tournament, and the habits and appearance of the combatants. The umpires were, Roberto da Sanseverino, Carlo Pandolfini, Tomaso Soderini, Ugolino Martelli, Niccolo Giugni, and Buongianni Gianfigliazzi. The candidates for the prize were eighteen in number. The steed upon which Lorenzo made his first appearance was presented to him by Ferdinand king of Naples. That on which he relied in the combat, by Borso marquis of Ferrara. The duke of Milan had furnished him with his suit of armour. His Motto was *Le tems revient*. His device, the *fleurs de lys*, the privilege of using the arms of France having shortly before been conceded to the Medici by Louis XI. by a solemn

[w] Of this poem I have seen only two editions; the first printed without note of date or place, but apparently about the year 1500, under the title of LA GIOSTRA DI LORENZO DE' MEDICI MESSA IN RIMA DA LUIGI DE' PULCI ANNO M,CCCC.LXVIII. in which it is to be observed, that this work is erroneously attributed to *Luigi* the author of the *Morgante*, instead of *Luca*, his brother. The other edition is printed in Florence by the Giunti, in 1572, accompanied by the *Ciriffo Calvaneo*, and the *Epistole* of *Luca Pulci*, and is there attributed to its proper author.

solemn act[x]. His first conflict was with Carlo Borromei; his next with Braccio de' Medici, who attacked him with such strength and courage, that if the stroke had taken place, Orlando himself, as the poet assures us, could not have withstood the shock. Lorenzo took speedy vengeance, but his spear breaking into a hundred pieces, his adversary was preserved from a total overthrow. He then assailed Carlo da Forme, whose helmet he split, and whom he nearly unhorsed. Lorenzo then changing his steed, made a violent attack upon Benedetto Salutati, who had just couched his lance ready for the combat. CHAP. II.

Vedestu mai falcon calare a piombo,
E poi spianarsi, e batter forte l' ale,
C' ha tratto fuori della schiera il colombo?
Così Lorenzo Benedetto assale;
Tanto che l' aria fa fischiar pel rombo,
Non va si presto folgor, non che strale;
Dettonsi colpi che parvon d'Achille
Et balza un mongibel fuori di faville.

Hast thou not seen the falcon in his flight,
When high in air on balanced wing he hung,

On

[x] The grant of this privilege yet remains. *V. Appx.* No. XIV.

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On some lone straggler of the covey light?
—On Benedetto thus Lorenzo sprung.
Whistled the air, as ardent for the fight,
Fleet as the arrow flies, he rushed along;
Achilles' rage their meeting strokes inspires,
Their sparkling armour rivals Etna's fires.

Poem of Politiano.

The poem of Politiano is of a very different character, and though produced about the same period of time, is a century posterior in point of refinement[y]. The age of Politiano, when he wrote it, scarcely exceeded fourteen years, and it must

[y] The *Stanze* of Politiano on the *Giostra* of Giuliano de' Medici have been frequently printed. In the earliest edition I have seen, they are accompanied by his Fable of Orseo, *stampate in Firenze, per Gianstephano di Carlo da Pavia, a stanza di Ser Piero Pacini da Pescia, questo dì* XV. *d'Ottobre* M.D.XIII. This, however is not the first edition, they having been printed in the lifetime of Politiano, though without his concurrence, as appears by the dedication from Alessandro Sartio to Galeazzo Bentivoglio, reprinted in the edition of 1513, wherein Sartio alludes to their having been printed by Plato de Benedictis, one of the best printers of the fifteenth century; and adds, "Credo ancora che se alquanto al Politiano dispiacerà "che queste sue Stanze dallui già disprezzate, si stam- "pino; pur all incontro gli piacerà che havendosi una "volta a divulgare, sotto il titolo e nome di tua Signoria "si divulghino." Many subsequent editions have been published at Venice, 1521, 1537, &c. and at Padua, by Comino, 1728, 1751, and 1765.

must not be denied that the poem bears upon the face of it the marks of juvenility—but what a manhood does it promise?—From such an early exuberance of blossom what fruits might we not expect? The general approbation with which it was received, must have been highly flattering both to the poet and the hero; nor has posterity appealed from the decision. On the contrary, it has been uniformly allowed that this was one of the earliest productions in the revival of letters, that breathed the true spirit of poetry; and that it not only far excelled the Giostra of Pulci, but essentially contributed towards the establishment of a better taste in Italy.

It may seem strange, that although this poem be of considerable length, containing about fourteen hundred lines, it is left unfinished, and breaks off even before the tournament begins. Instead of giving us, like Pulci, a minute description of the habiliments of the combatants, the poet takes a wider circuit, and indulges himself in digressions and episodes of great extent. The express purpose for which it was written would not indeed be very apparent, were it not for the information afforded us in the commencement; and even here the author does not propose to confine himself to one subject in particular,

CHAP. II. ticular, but professes to celebrate the feats of arms and pomps of Florence, and the loves and studies of Giuliano de' Medici[z]. Although Giuliano be the subject, the poem is addressed to Lorenzo, whose favour Politiano earnestly supplicates.

E tu, ben nato LAUR', sotto il cui velo
Fiorenza lieta in pace si riposa,
Nè teme i venti, o'l minacciar del cielo,
O Giove irato in vista più crucciosa;
Accogli al ombra del tuo santo ostelo
La voce umil, tremante, e paurosa;
Principio, e fin, di tutte le mie voglie,
Che sol vivon d' odor delle tue foglie.

Deh sarà mai che con più alte note,
Se non contrasti al mio voler fortuna,
Lo spirto delle membre, che divote
Ti fur da' fati, insin già dalla cuna
Risuoni te dai Numidi a Boote,
Dagl' Indi, al mar che'l nostro criel imbruna,
E, posto'l nido in tuo felice ligno,
Di roco augel diventi un bianco cigno?

High

[z] "Le gloriose pompe, e i fieri ludi
"Della città che 'l freno allenta e stringe
"A' magnanimi Toschi: e i regni crudi
"Di quella dea che'l terzo ciel dipinge:
"E i premj degni a gli onorati studi."

High born LORENZO! laurel!—in whose shade
Thy Florence rests, nor fears the lowering storm,
Nor threatening signs in heaven's high front displayed,
Nor Jove's dread anger in its fiercest form;
O to the trembling muse afford thine aid,
—The muse that courts thee, timorous and forlorn,
Lives in the shadow of thy prosperous tree,
And bounds her every fond desire to thee.

Ere long the spirit that this frame inspires,
This frame, that from its earliest hour was thine,
If fortune frown not on my vast desires,
Shall spread to distant shores thy name divine;
To lands that feel the sun's intenser fires,
That mark his earliest rise, his last decline;
Nurs'd in the shade thy spreading branch supplies,
Tuneless before, a tuneful swan I rise.

The poet then proceeds to describe the youthful employments and pursuits of Giuliano de' Medici, and particularly adverts to his repugnance to surrender his heart to the attacks continually made upon it by the fair sex.

Ah quante Ninfe per lui sospirorno!
Ma fu sì altero sempre il giovinetto,
Che mai le Ninfe amanti lo piegorno,
Mai potè riscaldarsi 'l freddo petto.
Facea sovente pe' boschi soggiorno;
Inculto sempre, e rigido in aspetto;
Il volto diffendea dal solar raggio
Con ghirlanda di pino, o verde faggio.

E poi,

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E poi, quando nel ciel parean le stelle,
Tutto gioioso a suo magion tornava;
E'n compagnia delle nove sorelle,
Celesti versi con disio cantava:
E d' antica virtù mille fiammelle,
Con gli alti carmi ne' petti destava:
Così chiamando amor lascivia umana,
Si godea con le Muse, e con Diana.

For Julian many a maiden heav'd the sigh,
And many a glance the tender flame confest;
But not the radiance of the brightest eye
Could melt the icy rigour of his breast.
Wide thro' the trackless woods the youth would hie,
Severe of aspect, and disdaining rest:
Whilst the dark pine, or spreading beech supplied
A wreath, from summer suns his head to hide.

When evening's star its milder lustre lends,
The wanderer to his cheerful home retires,
There every muse his lov'd return attends,
And generous aims, and heavenly verse inspires;
Deep through his frame the sacred song descends,
With thirst of ancient praise his soul that fires;
And Love, fond trifler, mourns his blunted dart,
That harmless flies where Dian shields the heart.

After some beautiful verses, in which Giuliano reproaches the weakness of those who devote themselves to the tender passion, he goes to

to the chace which gives the poet an opportunity of displaying his talent for description, in which he particularly excels. Love, who feels his divinity insulted, employs a stratagem to subdue the obdurate heart of Giuliano. A beautiful white hind crosses his way, which he pursues, but which perpetually eludes his endeavours to wound it, and leads him far distant from his companions. When his courser is almost exhausted with fatigue, a nymph makes her appearance, and Giuliano, astonished at her beauty, forgets the pursuit, and accosts her with trepidation and amazement. Her answer completes her triumph. Evening comes on, and Giuliano returns home, alone and pensive. The poet then enters upon a description of the court of Venus in the island of Cyprus, which extends to a considerable length, and is ornamented with all the graces of poetry. Cupid, having completed his conquest, returns thither to recount his success to his mother; who, in order to enhance its value, is desirous that Giuliano should signalize himself in a tournament. The whole band of loves accordingly repairs to Florence, and Giuliano prepares for the combat. In a dream sent by Venus, he seems to come off with victory. On his return, crowned with olive and laurel, his mistress appears to him, but

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but is soon enveloped in a thick cloud, and carried from his sight; which incident the poet applies to the sudden death of the beautiful Simonetta, the mistress of Giuliano[a]. Some consolatory verses are applied to the lover, who, awaking, invokes Minerva to crown his attempt with glory. But here the narrative is interrupted, nor does it appear that the author resumed his task at any subsequent period, having probably thrown the work aside as a production of his younger years, scarcely deserving of his riper attention.

Disputationes Camaldulenses.

The proficiency made by Lorenzo and Giuliano in active accomplishments, did not however retard their progress in the pursuits of science, or the acquisition of knowledge. About the year 1468, Landino wrote his *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, which, at the same time that they open to us the means of instruction adopted by him in the education of his pupils, give

[a] On this lady we have an epitaph by Politiano, (the substance of which is said to have been suggested to him by Giuliano,) printed amongst his smaller poems, in *Op. Ald.* 1498. And Bernardo Pulci has also left an elegy on her death, published by Miscomini at Florence in 1494.

give us the fairest evidence of their proficiency[b]. In the infancy of science, particular departments of knowledge are frequently cultivated with great success; but it is only in periods of high improvement that men are accustomed to comprehend the general plan of human life, and to allot to every occupation and pursuit its proper degree of importance. The *Disputationes Camaldulenses* afford us sufficient proof that the Florentines had, at this early period, arrived at that mental elevation, which enabled them to take a distinct view of the various objects by which they were surrounded, and to apply all that was then known of science to its best uses. In the introduction

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[b] This work was first published without note of place or date, but, as Bandini supposes, about the year 1472, (*Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* ii. *p.* 3.) or 1475. (*Ib. v.* ii. *p.* 192.) De Bure conjectures it was printed about the year 1480. (*Bibliographie Instructive, v.* iv. *p.* 272. *Ed.* 1763.) This edition is extremely scarce. Bandini could not find a copy in the Vatican library, although it appears in the catalogue. It was reprinted at Strasburg in the year 1508. The title of this last edition is, CHRISTOPHORI LANDINI FLORENTINI LIBRI QUATTUOR. *Primus de vita activa et contemplativa. Secundus de summo bono. Tertius et quartus in Publii Virgilii Maronis Allegorias;* and at the close, "*Has Camaldulenses Disputationes pulchrioribus typis* "*Mathias Schürerius, artium doctor excussit in officina sua* "*litteratoria Argentoraci die* XXVI. *Augusti. Anno Christi* "M.D.VIII. *Regnante Cæsare Maximiliano Augusto.*"

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duction to this work Landino informs us, that having, in company with his brother Piero, made an excursion from his villa in Casentina to a monastery in the wood of Camaldoli, they found that Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici had arrived there before them, accompanied by Alamanni Rinuccini, and Piero and Donato Acciajuoli; all men of learning and eloquence, who had applied themselves with great diligence to philosophical studies. The pleasure of their first meeting was enhanced by the arrival of Leo Battista Alberti, who, returning from Rome, had met with Marsilio Ficino, and had prevailed upon him to pass a few days, during the heat of autumn, in the healthful retreat of Camaldoli. Mariotto, abbot of the monastery, introduced to each other his learned friends; and the remainder of the day, for it was then drawing towards evening, was passed in attending to the conversation of Alberti, of whose disposition and accomplishments Landino gives us a most favourable idea[c]. On the following day, after the perform-

[c] Erat enim vir ille, omnium quos plura jam secula produxerint, omni humanitatis, ac salium genere cumulatassimus; nam quid de litteris loquar? cum nihil omnino extet, quod quidem homini scire fas sit, in quo ille scienter, prudenterque, non versaretur.

Land. Disput. Camal. fi. 7. *Ed.* 1508.

performance of religious duties, the whole company agreed to ascend through the wood towards the summit of the hill, and in a short time arrived at a solitary spot, where the extended branches of a large beech overhung a clear spring of water. At the invitation of Alberti, a conversation here takes place, which he begins by observing, that those persons may be esteemed peculiarly happy, who, having improved their minds by study, can withdraw themselves at intervals from publick engagements and private anxiety, and in some agreeable retreat indulge themselves in an ample range through all the objects of the natural and moral world. "But "if this be an occupation suitable for all men "of learning, it is more particularly so for "you," continued Alberti, addressing himself to Lorenzo and Giuliano, "on whom the direc- "tion of the affairs of the republick is likely, "from the increasing infirmities of your father, "soon to devolve[d]. For although Lorenzo, "you

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[d] *Land. Disput. Camal. fo.* 7. Bandini conjectures that Landino composed this work about the year 1460, (*Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* ii. *fo.* 2.) at which time Lorenzo was only twelve years of age. But from the above passage it is evident that it was written towards the latter part of the life of Piero de' Medici, and probably about the year 1468, when Lorenzo had already distinguished himself by his successful interference in publick affairs.

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" you have given proof of such virtues as would " induce us to think them rather of divine " than human origin; although there seems to " be no undertaking so momentous as not to be " accomplished by that prudence and courage " which you have displayed, even in your early " years; and although the impulse of youthful " ambition, and the full enjoyment of those " gifts of fortune which have often intoxicated " men of high expectation and great virtue, " have never yet been able to impel you beyond " the just bounds of moderation; yet, both you, " and that republick which you are shortly to " direct, or rather which now in a great mea- " sure reposes on your care, will derive import- " ant advantages from those hours of leisure, " which you may pass either in solitary medi- " tation, or social discussion, on the origin and " nature of the human mind. / For it is impos- " sible that any person should rightly direct " the affairs of the republick, unless he has pre- " viously established in himself virtuous habits, " and enlightened his understanding with that " knowledge, which will enable him early to " discern why he is called into existence, what " is due to others, and what to himself.") A conversation then commences between Lorenzo and Alberti, in which the latter endeavours to shew, that as reason is the distinguishing characteristick

teristick of man, the perfection of his nature is only to be attained by the cultivation of his mind, and by a total abstraction from worldly pursuits. Lorenzo who is not a mere silent auditor, opposes a doctrine which, if carried to its extreme, would separate man from his duties; and contends, that no essential distinction can be made between active and contemplative life, but that each should mutually assist and improve the other; and this he illustrates in such a variety of instances, that although it is evidently the object of Landino, through the medium of Alberti, to establish the pure Platonick dogma, that abstract contemplation can alone constitute the essence of human happiness, yet Lorenzo appears to have raised objections which the ingenuity of the philosopher in the sequel of the dispute seems scarcely to have invalidated[e]. On the following day the same subject

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[e] Alberti appears, from the following passage, to have almost given up the contest: "Nam quod aiebas "maximum idcirco inde provenire reipublicæ detri- "mentum, quod occupatis excellentioribus ingeniis circa "veri cognitionem, ipsa a deterioribus regatur, nun- "quam profecto cessabit sapiens, quin se de rebus arduis "consulentes recta semper moneat; unde si non opera, "consilio tamen juvabit." (*Quæst. Camal. fi.* 28.) Thus the philosopher is obliged to stoop from his celestial height,

CHAP. II. subject is pursued, and Alberti fully explains the doctrine of Plato respecting the true end and aim of human life; illustrating it by the opinions of many of the most celebrated followers of that philosopher. The third and fourth days are spent in a commentary by Alberti on the Eneid, in which he endeavours to shew, that under the fiction of the poem are represented the leading doctrines of that philosophy which had been the subject of their previous discussion. Whatever may be thought of the propriety of such a construction, certain it is that there are many passages in this poem which seem strongly to countenance such an opinion; and at all events, the idea is supported by Alberti with such a display of learning, and such a variety of proofs, as must have rendered his commentary highly amusing and instructive to his youthful auditors.

Lorenzo's description of his mistress.

It must not however be supposed, that amidst his studious avocations, Lorenzo was insensible to that passion which has at all times been the soul of poetry, and has been so philosophically and

height, and to disturb the calm repose of his mind with the cares of this grosser world.—Beautiful, but impracticable system of philosophy! which must perhaps wait for its completion till another state of being.

and so variously described in his own writings. To this subject he has indeed devoted a considerable portion of his works; but it is somewhat extraordinary that he has not thought proper upon any occasion, to inform us of the name of his mistress; nor has he gratified our curiosity so far as to give her even a poetical appellation. Petrarca had his Laura, and Dante his Beatrice; but Lorenzo has studiously concealed the name of the sovereign of his affections, leaving it to be ascertained by a thousand brilliant descriptions of her superlative beauty and accomplishments. In the usual order of things it is love that creates the poet; but with Lorenzo, poetry appears to have been the occasion of his love. The circumstances, as related by himself, are these[f]:—"A young lady of great "personal attractions happened to die in Flo- "rence; and as she had been very generally "admired and beloved, so her death was as "generally lamented. Nor was this to be won- "dered at; for, independent of her beauty, her "manners were so engaging, that almost every "person

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[f] *Commento di Lor. de' Medici sopra alcuni de' suoi Sonetti nel fine delle sue Poesie volgari, p.* 123, 129, *&c. Ed. Ald.* 1554.

CHAP. II. " person who had any acquaintance with her, " flattered himself that he had obtained the " chief place in her affections. This fatal event " excited the extreme regret of her admirers; " and as she was carried to the place of burial, " with her face uncovered, those who had " known her when living pressed for a last look " at the object of their adoration, and accom- " panied her funeral with their tears[g],

" Whilst death smil'd lovely in her lovely face."

Morte bella parea nel suo bel volto. PETR.

" On

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[g] From this singular circumstance, compared with the evidence of one of the epigrams of Politiano, we are enabled to determine that this lady was the beautiful Simonetta, the mistress of Giuliano de' Medici, to whose untimely death we have before adverted.

" *In Simonettam.*

" Dum pulchra effertur nigro Simonetta feretro,
" Blandus et exanimi spirat in ore lepos,
" Nactus amor tempus quo non sibi turba caveret,
" Jecit ab occlusis mille faces oculis:
" Mille animos cepit viventis imagine risus;
" Ac morti insultans, est mea, dixit, adhuc;
" Est mea, dixit, adhuc, nondum totam eripis illam,
" Illa vel exanimis militat ecce mihi.
" Dixit—et ingemuit—neque enim satis apta triumphis
" Illa puer vidit tempora—sed lachrymis."

Pol. lib. Epigram. in Op. Ald. 1498.

"On this occasion all the eloquence and the CHAP. II.
"wit of Florence were exerted in paying due
"honours to her memory, both in prose and in
"verse. Amongst the rest, I also composed a
"few sonnets; and in order to give them
"greater effect, I endeavoured to convince
"myself that I too had been deprived of the
"object of my love, and to excite in my own
"mind all those passions that might enable me
"to move the affections of others. Under the
"influence of this delusion, I began to think
"how severe was the fate of those by whom she
"had been beloved; and from thence was led
"to consider, whether there was any other lady
"in this city deserving of such honour and
"praise, and to imagine the happiness that
"must be experienced by any one whose good
"fortune could procure him such a subject for
"his pen. I accordingly sought for some time
"without having the satisfaction of finding any
"one, who, in my judgment, was deserving of
"a sincere and constant attachment. But when
"I had nearly resigned all expectations of suc-
"cess, chance threw in my way that which had
"been denied to my most diligent inquiry; as if
"the god of love had selected this hopeless
"period, to give me a more decisive proof of
"his power. A publick festival was held in Flo-
"rence, to which all that was noble and beau-
"tiful

CHAP. II. "tiful in the city resorted. To this I was "brought by some of my companions (I suppose "as my destiny led) against my will, for I had "for some time past avoided such exhibitions; "or if at times I attended them, it proceeded "rather from a compliance with custom, than "from any pleasure I experienced in them. "Amongst the ladies there assembled, I saw "one of such sweet and attractive manners, that "whilst I regarded her, I could not help saying, "*If this person were possessed of the delicacy, the "understanding, the accomplishments of her who "is lately dead—most certainly she excels her in "the charms of her person.*"

* * * *

"Resigning myself to my passion, I endea-"voured to discover, if possible, how far her man-"ners and her conversation agreed with her ap-"pearance, and here I found such an assemblage "of extraordinary endowments, that it was diffi-"cult to say whether she excelled more in her "person, or in her mind. Her beauty was, as I "have before mentioned, astonishing. She was "of a just and proper height. Her complexion "extremely fair, but not pale; blooming, but "not ruddy. Her countenance was serious, "without being severe; mild and pleasant, with-"out levity or vulgarity. Her eyes were lively,

"without

" without any indication of pride or conceit. CHAP.
" Her whole shape was so finely proportioned, II.
" that amongst other women she appeared with
" superiour dignity, yet free from the least degree
" of formality or affectation. In walking, in
" dancing, or in other exercises which display
" the person, every motion was elegant and
" appropriate.—Her sentiments were always
" just and striking, and have furnished materials
" for some of my sonnets; she always spoke at
" the proper time, and always to the purpose,
" so that nothing could be added, nothing taken
" away. Though her remarks were often keen
" and pointed, yet they were so tempered as not
" to give offence. Her understanding was
" superiour to her sex, but without the appear-
" ance of arrogance or presumption; and
" she avoided an errour too common among
" women, who, when they think themselves
" sensible, become for the most part insupport-
" able[h]. To recount all her excellencies would
" far

[h] Let it not be thought that I should hazard such a sentiment without the full authority of my author, who has indeed expressed it in more general terms.—" Lo " ingegno," says he " meraviglioso e ciò senza fasta o " presunzione, e fuggendo un certo vitio commune à " donne, à quali parendo d'intendere assai, divengono " insup-

CHAP. II.

"far exceed my present limits, and I shall there-
"fore conclude with affirming, that there was
"nothing which could be desired in a beautiful
"and accomplished woman, which was not in
"her most abundantly found. By these qua-
"lities I was so captivated, that not a power or
"faculty of my body or mind remained any
"longer at liberty, and I could not help consi-
"dering the lady who had died, as the star of
"Venus, which at the approach of the sun is
"totally overpowered and extinguished." Such is the description that Lorenzo has left us of the object of his passion, in his comment upon the first sonnet which he wrote in her praise; and if we do not allow great latitude to the partiality of a lover, we must confess that few poets have been fortunate enough to meet with a mistress so well calculated to excite their zeal, or to justify the effects of their admiration.

Sonnets in her praise.

The first poetical offspring of this passion was the following

SONETTO:

"insupportabili; volendo giudicare ogni cosa, che vol-
"garmente le chiamiamo Saccenti."—But we must recollect that Lorenzo de' Medici wrote in the fifteenth century!

SONETTO:

Lasso a me, quando io son la dove sia
Quell' angelico, altero, e dolce volto,
Il freddo sangue intorno al core accolto
Lascia senza color la faccia mia:
Poi mirando la sua, mi par sì pia,
Ch'io prendo ardire, e torna il valor tolto;
Amor ne' raggi de' begli occhi involto
Mostra al mio tristo cor la cieca via:
E parlandogli alhor, dice, io ti giuro
Pel santo lume di questi occhi belli
Del mio stral forza, e del mio regno onore,
Ch'io sarò sempre teco; e ti assicuro
Esser vera pietà che mostran quelli:
Credogli lasso! e da me fugge il core.

Alas for me! whene'er my footsteps trace
Those precincts where eternal beauty reigns,
The sanguine current from a thousand veins
Flows round my heart and pallid grows my face:
But when I mark that smile of heavenly grace,
Its wonted powers my drooping soul regains;
Whilst Love, that in her eyes his state maintains,
Points to my wandering heart its resting place;
And stooping from his beamy mansion swears,
"By all that forms my power and points my dart,
"The living lustre of those radiant eyes,
"I still will guide thy way; dismiss thy fears;
"True are those looks of love." My trusting heart
Believes th' insidious vow—and from me flies.

The

CHAP. II.

The effects of this passion on Lorenzo were such as might be expected to be produced on a young and sensible mind. Instead of the glaring exhibitions to which he had been accustomed, the hurry of the city, and the publick avocations of life, he found in himself a disposition for silence and for solitude, and was pleased in associating the ideas produced by every rural object with that of the mistress of his affections. Of these sentiments he has afforded us a specimen in the following sonnet:

SONETTO:

Cerchi chi vuol, le pompe, e gli alti honori,
Le piazze, e tempi, e gli edifici magni,
Le delicie, il tesor, qual accompagni
Mille duri pensier, mille dolori:
Un verde praticel pien di bei fiori,
Un rivolo, che l' erba intorno bagni,
Un augelletto, che d' amor si lagni,
Acquetã molto meglio i nostri ardori.
L' ombrose selve, i sassi, e gli alti monti,
Gli antri oscuri, e le fere fuggitive,
Qualche leggiadra Ninfa paurosa;
Quivi veggio io con pensier vaghi, e pronti
Le belle luci, come fossin vive:
Qui me le toglie hor una, hor altra cosa.

Seek he who will in grandeur to be blest,
Place in proud halls, and splendid courts, his joy,

For

For pleasure, or for gold, his arts employ,
Whilst all his hours unnumbered cares molest.
—A little field in native flow'rets drest,
A rivulet in soft murmurs gliding by,
A bird whose love-sick note salutes the sky,
With sweeter magick lull my cares to rest.
And shadowy woods, and rocks, and towering hills,
And caves obscure, and nature's free-born train,
And some lone nymph that timorous speeds along,
Each in my mind some gentle thought instills
Of those bright eyes that absence shrouds in vain;
—Ah gentle thoughts! soon lost the city cares among.

Having thus happily found a mistress that deserved his attention, Lorenzo was not negligent in celebrating her praises. On this, his constant theme, he has given us a considerable number of beautiful sonnets, canzoni, and other poetical compositions, which, like those of Petrarca, are sometimes devoted to the more general celebration of the person, or the mind of his mistress, and sometimes dwell only on one particular feature or accomplishment; whilst at other times these productions advert to the effects of his own passion, which is analyzed and described with every possible illustration of poetick ingenuity and philosophick refinement.

Lucretia Donati the object of his passion.

But having thus far traced the passion of Lorenzo, we may now be allowed to ask who was

CHAP. II.

was the object of so refined a love; adored without being defined, and celebrated without a name? Fortunately the friends of Lorenzo were not in this respect equally delicate with himself. Politiano, in his Giostra of Giuliano, has celebrated the mistress of Lorenzo by the name of Lucretia. And Ugolino Verini, in his Fiametta, has addressed to her a Latin poem in elegiack verse, in which he shews himself a powerful advocate for Lorenzo, and contends, that whatever might be her accomplishments, he was a lover deserving of her favour[i]. Valori affords us more particular information: from him we learn that Lucretia was a lady of the noble family of the Donati, equally distinguished by her beauty and her virtue; and a descendant of Curtio Donato, who had rendered himself eminent throughout Italy by his military achievements[k].

Whether the assiduities of Lorenzo, and the persuasions of his friends, were sufficiently powerful to soften that obduracy which there is reason to presume Lucretia manifested on his first addresses, yet remains a matter of doubt. The sonnets of Lorenzo rise and fall through every degree of the thermometer of love; he exults

[i] *v. Appx. No.* XV.

[k] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 8.

exults and he despairs—he freezes and he burns—he sings of raptures too great for mortal sense, and he applauds a severity of virtue that no solicitations can move. From such contradictory testimony what are we to conclude? Lorenzo has himself presented us with the key that unlocks this mystery. From the relation which he has before given, we find that Lucretia was the mistress of the poet, and not of the man. Lorenzo sought for an object to concentrate his ideas, to give them strength and effect, and he found in Lucretia a subject that suited his purpose, and deserved his praise. But having so far realized his mistress, he has dressed and ornamented her according to his own imagination. Every action of her person, every motion of her mind, is subject to his control. She smiles, or she frowns; she refuses, or relents; she is absent, or present; she intrudes upon his solitude by day, or visits him in his nightly dreams, just as his presiding fancy directs. In the midst of these delightful visions Lorenzo was called upon to attend to the dull realities of life. He had now attained his twenty-first year, and his father conceived that it was time for him to enter into the conjugal state. To this end he had negotiated a marriage between Lorenzo and Clarice, the daughter of Giacopo Orsini, of the noble and powerful Roman

CHAP. II.

Lorenzo marries Clarice Orsini.

CHAP. II. Roman family of that name, which had so long contended for superiority with that of the Colonna. Whether Lorenzo despaired of success in his youthful passion, or whether he subdued his feelings at the voice of paternal authority, is left to conjecture only. Certain however it is, that in the month of December 1468, he was betrothed to a person whom it is probable he had never seen, and the marriage ceremony was performed on the fourth day of June following[l]. That the heart of Lorenzo had little share in this engagement is marked by a striking circumstance. In adverting to his marriage in his Ricordi, he bluntly remarks that he took this lady to wife, *or rather*, says he, *she was given to me*, on the day before mentioned[m]. Notwithstanding this indifference, it appears from indisputable documents, that a real affection soon afterwards subsisted between them;

[l] Bayle is mistaken in supposing that the marriage of Lorenzo took place in 1471. Speaking of Machiavelli, he says; "Il ne marque pas l' annee de ce mariage, ce qui est un grand defaut dans un Ecrivain d' histoire, "mais on peut recueillir de sa narration que ce fut l' an "1471." *Dict. Hist. Art. Politien.* In correcting Bayle, Menckenius falls into a greater errour, and places this event in 1472. *Menck. in vitâ Pol. p.* 48.

[m] *Ricordi di Lor. Appi. No.* XII.

them; and there is reason to presume that Lorenzo always treated her with particular respect and kindness. Their nuptials were celebrated with great splendour. Two military spectacles were exhibited, one of which represented a field battle of horsemen, and the other the attack and storming of a fortified citadel. CHAP. II.

Visits the duke of Milan.

In the month of July following, Lorenzo took another journey to Milan, for the purpose of standing sponsor, in the name of his father, to Galeazzo, the eldest son of Galeazzo Sforza, the reigning duke. In this expedition he was accompanied by Gentile d'Urbino, who gave a regular narrative of their proceedings to Clarice. A letter from Lorenzo himself to his wife is also yet preserved, written upon his arrival at Milan, which, though very short, and not distinguished by any flights of fancy, exhibits more sincerity and affection than the greater part of his amorous sonnets[n]. 1469.

Lorenzo de' Medici to his wife Clarice.

"*I arrived here in safety, and am in good* "*health. This I believe will please thee better* "*than*

[n] *Fabr. in vitâ Lor. Adnot. & Mon. v.* ii. *p.* 56.

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" than any thing else except my return: at least " so I judge from my own desire to be once more " with thee. Associate as much as possible with " my father and my sisters. I shall make all " possible speed to return to thee, for it appears a " thousand years till I see thee again. Pray to " God for me. If thou want any thing from this " place write in time. From Milan, twenty-" second July 1469.

" Thy Lorenzo de' Medici."

From the Ricordi of Lorenzo and the letters of Gentile, it appears that Lorenzo was treated at Milan with great distinction and honour. *More indeed,* says he, *than were shewn to any other person present, although there were many much better entitled to it.* On his departure he presented the duchess with a gold necklace, and a diamond which cost about three thousand ducats; *whence,* says he in his Ricordi, *it followed, that the duke requested that I would stand sponsor to all his other children.*

Death of Piero de' Medici.

Piero de' Medici did not long survive the marriage of his son. Exhausted by bodily sufferings, and wearied with the arrogant and tyrannical conduct of many of those who had espoused his cause, and which his infirmities prevented him from repressing, he died on the

the third day of December 1469, leaving his widow Lucretia, who survived him many years. His funeral was without ostentation; "perhaps," says Ammirato, "because he had in his lifetime "given directions to that effect; or because "the parade of a magnificent interment might "have excited the envy of the populace towards "his successours, to whom it was of more im- "portance to *be* great, than to *appear* to be so[o]." CHAP. II.

Before Piero was attacked by the disorder which for a long time rendered him almost incapable of attending to publick business, he had been employed in several embassies of the greatest importance, which he had executed much to his own honour, and the advantage of the republick. Even after he was disabled from attending in the council, he continued to regulate the affairs of Florence, and to discuss with the principal citizens the most important subjects, in such a manner as to evince the solidity of his judgment and the integrity of his heart. He possessed a competent share of eloquence, some specimens of which are given by Machiavelli, who asserts that the extortions and abuses practised

[o] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *p.* 106.

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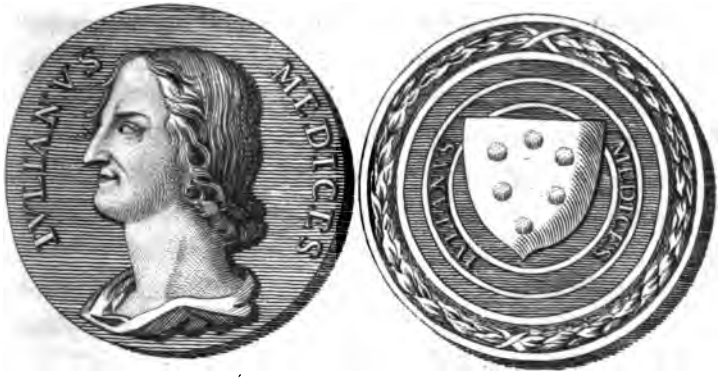
tised by his friends and adherents were so flagitious, and so hateful to his temper, that, if he had lived, it was his intention to have recalled the exiled citizens; for which purpose he had an interview, at his seat at Caffagiolo, with Agnolo Acciajuoli; but the numerous errours of this celebrated historian give us just reason to doubt on those points which have not the concurrent testimony of other writers. "It is "probable," says Tiraboschi, "that had Piero "enjoyed better health and longer life, he might "have done more for the interests of literature, "but if he had only been known as the father "of Lorenzo de' Medici, it would have been "a sufficient title to the gratitude of posterity."

CHAP. III.

POLITICAL state of Italy—Venice—Naples—Milan—Rome—Florence—Lorenzo succeeds to the direction of the republick—Giuliano de' Medici—Attack on Prato—League against the Turks—Riches of the Medici—Their commercial concerns—Other sources of their revenue—The duke of Milan visits Florence—Lorenzo devotes his leisure to literature—Angelo Politiano—His temper and character—Death of Paul II.—*A persecutor of learned men—Succeeded by Sixtus* IV.—*Lorenzo deputed to congratulate him—Revolt and sackage of Volterra—Lorenzo establishes the academy of Pisa—Negotiation for a marriage between the dauphin and a daughter of the king of Naples—The king declines the proposal—Ambition and rapacity of Sixtus* IV.—*League between the duke of Milan, the Venetians, and the Florentines—The King of Denmark at Florence—Progress of the Platonick academy—Poem of Lorenzo entitled* ALTERCAZIONE—*Platonick festival—Effects of this institution—Number and celebrity of its members.*



CHAP. III.

At the time of the death of Piero de' Medici, the republick of Florence was not engaged in any open war. The absentees were however a cause of continual alarm, and the situation of the Italian states was such, as to give just grounds of apprehension that the tranquillity of that country would not long remain undisturbed. Of these the most powerful was that of Venice, which aspired to nothing less than the dominion of all Lombardy, and the supreme control of Italy itself. The superiority which it had acquired was in a great degree derived from the extensive commerce then carried on by the Venetians to different parts of the East, the valuable pro-

1469.

Political state of Italy.

Venice.

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ductions of which were conveyed by way of Egypt into the Mediterranean, and from thence distributed by the Venetians throughout the rest of Europe. In this branch of commerce the Genoese and the Florentines had successively attempted to rival them; but although each of these people, and particularly the latter, had obtained a considerable portion of this lucrative trade, the Venetians maintained a decided superiority, until the discovery of a new and more expeditious communication with India, by the Cape of Good Hope, turned the course of eastern traffick into a new channel. The numerous vessels employed in transporting their commodities to different countries, rendered the state of Venice the most formidable maritime power in Europe. Ever intent on its own aggrandizement, it has only been restrained within its limits by formidable leagues between the Italian sovereigns, and by the seasonable intervention of foreign powers. Its internal tranquillity is remarkably contrasted with the turbulence of Florence; but the Venetian nobility had erected their authority on the necks of the people, and Venice was a republick of nobles, with a populace of slaves. In no country was despotism ever reduced to a more accurate system. The proficiency made by the Venetians in literature has accordingly born no proportion to the rank which

which they have in other respects held among the Italian states. The talents of the higher orders were devoted to the support of their authority, or the extension of their territory; and among the lower class, with their political rights, their emulation was effectually extinguished. Whilst the other principal cities of Italy were daily producing works of genius, Venice was content with the humble, but more lucrative employment of communicating those works to the publick by means of the press. Other governments have exhibited a different aspect at different times, according to the temper of the sovereign, or the passions of the multitude; but Venice has uniformly preserved the same settled features, and remains to the present day a phenomenon in political history. CHAP. III.

The kingdom of Naples was at this time governed by Ferdinand of Arragon, who had in the year 1458 succeeded his father Alfonso. Under his administration that country experienced a degree of prosperity to which it had long been a stranger. At the same time that Ferdinand kept a watchful eye on the other governments of Italy, and particularly on that of Venice, he was consulting the happiness of his own subjects by the institution of just and equal laws, and by the promotion of commerce and Naples.

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and of letters; but the virtues of the monarch were sullied by the crimes of the man, and the memory of Ferdinand is disgraced by repeated instances of treachery and inhumanity. Galeazzo Maria, son of the eminent Francesco Sforza, held the states of Milan, which were then of considerable extent. Of the virtues and talents of the father little however is to be traced in the character of the son. Immoderate in his pleasures, lavish in his expenses, rapacious in supplying his wants, he incurred the contempt and hatred of his subjects. Like another Nero, he mingled with his vices a taste for science and for arts. To the follies and the crimes of this man, posterity must trace the origin of all those evils which, after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, depopulated and laid waste the most flourishing governments of Italy.

Milan.

Rome.

The pontifical chair was filled by Paul II. the successour of Pius II. A Venetian by birth, he had been educated in the profession of a merchant. On his uncle Eugenius IV. being promoted to the papacy, he changed his views, and betook himself to study, but too late in life to make any great proficiency. To compensate for this defect, Paul assumed a degree of magnificence and splendour before unknown. His garments were highly ornamented, and his tiara

was

was richly adorned with jewels. Of a tall and imposing figure, he appeared in his processions like a new Aaron, and commanded the respect and veneration of the multitude. His dislike to literature was shewn by an unrelenting persecution of almost all the men of learning who had the misfortune to reside within his dominions. In the pontifical government, it may with justice be observed, that the interests of the prince and the people are always at variance with each other. Raised to the supremacy at an advanced period of life, when the claims of kindred begin to draw closer round the heart, the object of the pope is generally the aggrandizement of his family; and as he succeeds to the direction of a state whose finances have been exhausted by his predecessor, under the influence of similar passions, he employs the short space of time allowed him, in a manner the most advantageous to himself, and the most oppressive to his subjects. Such is nearly the uniform tenour of this government; but in the fifteenth century, when the pope by his secular power held a distinguished rank among the sovereigns of Italy, he often looked beyond the resources of his own subjects, and attempted to possess himself by force of some of the smaller independent states which bordered upon his dominions, and over which the holy see always pretended

CHAP. III. pretended a paramount claim, as having at some previous time formed a part of its territory, and having been either wrested from it by force, or wrongfully granted away by some former pontiff. These subordinate governments, though obtained by the power of the Roman state, were generally disposed of to the nominal nephews of the pope, who frequently bore in fact a nearer relationship to him; and were held by them until another successour in the see had power enough to dispossess the family of his predecessor, and vest the sovereignty in his own.

Florence. With any of these governments, either in extent of territory, or in point of military establishment, the city of Florence could not contend; but she possessed some advantages that rendered her of no small importance in the concerns of Italy. Independent of the superiour activity and acuteness of her inhabitants, their situation, almost in the centre of the contending powers, gave them an opportunity of improving circumstances to their own interest, of which they seldom failed to avail themselves; and if Florence was inferiour to the rest in the particulars before mentioned, she excelled them all in the promptitude with which she could apply her resources when necessity required. The battles of

of the Florentines were generally fought by *Condottieri*, who sold, or rather lent their troops to those who offered the best price; for the skill of the commander was shewn in these contests, not so much in destroying the enemy, as in preserving from destruction those followers on whom he depended for his importance or his support. The Florentines were collectively and individually rich; and as the principal inhabitants did not hesitate, on pressing emergencies, to contribute to the credit and supply of the republick, the city of Florence was generally enabled to perform an important part in the transactions of Italy, and if not powerful enough to act alone, was perhaps more desirable as an ally than any other state of that country[a]. CHAP. III.

Such

[a] Of the population and finances of Florence, in the fifteenth century, I am enabled to give some interesting particulars, from a manuscript of that period, hitherto unpublished, entitled *Inventiva d' una imposition di nuova gravezza*, or "A proposition for a new mode of taxation," by Lodovico Ghetti. In this document the projector calculates the number of Florentine citizens capable of bearing arms at 80,000 men, which, by computing four persons with each, so as to include infirm people, women, and children, he estimates as a population of 400,000 inhabitants. He then calculates the amount of the consumption, by this number of inhabitants, of the necessary articles of life, of which he proposes to take a tenth part in

CHAP. III.

Such was the situation of the different governments of Italy at the time of the death of Piero de' Medici; but, besides these, a number of inferiour states interfered in the politicks of the times, and on some occasions with no inconsiderable effect. Borso d' Este, marquis of Ferrara, although of illegitimate birth, had succeeded to the government on the death of Leonello, to the exclusion of his own legitimate brothers, and administered its affairs with great reputation[b]. Torn by domestick factions, the Genoese were

in one general tax upon the produce of the soil and the labour of the country, amounting to 475,315 florins, which, after making all due allowances, would be sufficient to support the military establishment of the republick, and to discharge the other necessary expenses of the government. Many other particulars, respecting the ancient state of Florence may be found in this piece, which I have given in the Appendix, as accurately as the state of the manuscript will admit. *v. Appx. No.* XVI.

The florin is no longer a current coin in Tuscany; it may therefore be proper to observe, that the value of the ancient florin, or *Fiorino d' oro*, was about two shillings and sixpence, having been of the value of three lire and ten soldi. *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* ii. *p.* 753.

[b] The family of Este may be considered as powerful rivals of the Medici in the encouragement of learning and arts. This taste seems to have arisen with Leonello, who had studied under Guarino Veronese. (*Tirab. v.* vi. *p.* 2. *p.* 259.)

were held in subjection by the duke of Milan, whilst Sienna and Lucca, each boasting a free government, were indebted for their independence rather to the mutual jealousy of their neighbours, than to any resources of their own. CHAP. III.

Lorenzo succeeds to the direction of the republick.

We have already seen, that during the indisposition of Piero de' Medici, Lorenzo had frequently interfered in the administration of the republick, and had given convincing proofs of his talents and his assiduity. Upon the death of

p. 259) and is not less entitled to a place in the annals of letters than in those of political events. Under his protection the university of Ferrara was splendidly reestablished and endowed. His court was resorted to by men of learning from all parts of Italy. Of his own poetical productions some specimens yet remain which do honour to his memory. "Principe," says Muratori, "d' immortale memoria; perchè, secondo la Cronica di Ferrara, fu amatore della pace, della giustitia, e della pietà; di vita onestissima, studioso delle divine scritture, liberale massimamente verso i poveri; nelle avversità paziente, nelle prosperità moderato, e che con gran sapienza governò e mantenne sempre quieti i suoi popoli; di modo che si meritò il pregiatissimo nome di Padre della Patria." *Mur. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 439.) His successour was not inferiour to him as a patron of learning; and Ercole I. who succeeded Borso in 1471, continued his hereditary protection of literature to the ensuing century.

CHAP. III. of his father, he therefore succeeded to his authority as if it had been a part of his patrimony. On the second day after that event, he was attended at his own house by many of the principal inhabitants of Florence, who requested that he would take upon himself the administration and care of the republick, in the same manner as his grandfather and his father had before done[c]. Had Lorenzo even been devested of ambition, he well knew the impossibility of retiring with safety to a private station, and without long hesitation complied with the wishes of his fellow-citizens[d]. Sensible, however, of the

[c] *Ricor. di Lor. in Appn. No.* XII.

[d] If we give implicit credit to Machiavelli, Lorenzo was in a great degree indebted for this high distinction to Tomaso Soderini, who (as that author informs us) had, after the death of Piero de' Medici, obtained such influence in the city, that he was consulted on all affairs of importance, and was even addressed by foreign powers as the principal person in the republick. On this trying occasion, Tomaso, we are told, gave a striking proof of his moderation and fidelity. He assembled by night the principal citizens in the convent of S. Antonio, when Lorenzo and Giuliano were present, to take into consideration the state of the republick; where, by many arguments, he convinced his auditors of the expediency of continuing the Medici in the elevated station which their ancestors had so long enjoyed. (*Mac. Ist. lib.* 7) This account,

the difficulties which he had to encounter, he took every precaution to obviate the ill effects of envy and suspicion, by selecting, as his principal advisers, such of the citizens as were most esteemed for their integrity and their prudence, whom he consulted on all occasions of importance. This practice, which he found so useful to him in his youth, he continued in his maturer years; but after having duly weighed the opinions of others, he was accustomed to decide on the measures to be adopted, by the strength of his

account, though so circumstantially related, and adopted even by Ammirato and Fabroni, I am led to reject, on the simple narrative of Lorenzo in his Ricordi. If Lorenzo was in fact called upon to take the direction of the republick two days after the death of his father, there seems to have been but little time allowed for the honours paid by the citizens, and by foreign powers, to Tomaso Soderini. And if Lorenzo accepted of this honourable distinction in his own house, as he expressly informs us was the case, there was no occasion for his attendance in the convent of S. Antonio, whilst the citizens debated, whether he should preserve the rank which his family had so long held in Florence. His continuance in this rank was not owing to the favour or the eloquence of an individual, but to the extensive wealth and influence of his family, its powerful foreign connexions, and above all, perhaps, to the remembrance of the many benefits which it had conferred upon the republick.

CHAP. III. his own judgment, and not seldom in opposition to the sentiments of those with whom he had advised. Letters of condolence were addressed to him on the death of his father, not only by many eminent individuals, but by several of the states and princes of Italy, and from some he received particular embassies, with assurances of friendship and support.

Giuliano de' Medici.

Between Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano there subsisted a warm and uninterrupted affection. Educated under the same roof, they had always participated in the same studies and amusements. Giuliano was therefore no stranger to the learned languages, and, in his attention to men of talents, emulated the example and partook of the celebrity of his brother. He delighted in musick and in poetry, particularly in that of his native tongue, which he cultivated with success; and by his generosity and urbanity gained in a great degree the affections of the populace, to which it is probable his fondness for publick exhibitions not a little contributed. At the death of his father, Giuliano was only about sixteen years of age, so that the administration of publick affairs rested wholly on Lorenzo, whose constant attention to the improvement of his brother may be considered as

as the most unequivocal proof of his affection [e]. CHAP. III.

A hasty and ill-conducted attempt by Bernado Nardi, one of the Florentine exiles, to surprise and possess himself of the town of Prato, Attack on Prato.

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[e] "Gaudeo mirum in modum Julianum nostrum se "totum literis tradidisse; illi gratulor, ubique gratias "ago, quod eum ad hæc prosequenda studia excitaveris."
Laur. Med. ad Pol. in Ep. Pol. lib. 10.

"Julianus tuus verè frater, hoc est ut docti putant "ferè alter, ipse sibi in studiis est non modo jam miri- "ficus hortator, sed et preceptor; nihilque nobis ad "summam voluptatem deest nisi quod abes," &c.
Pol. ad Laur. Med. ib.

If we may admit the evidence of a poet, the two brothers exhibited a striking example of fraternal affection.

In Laurentium, Juliumque Petri F. Fratres piissimos.

"Nec tanta Ebalios tenuit concordia fratres,
"Nec tanto Atridas fœdere junxit amor,
"Implicuit quanto *Medicum* duo pectora nexu
"Mitis amor, concors gratia, pura fides;
"Unum velle animis, unum est quoque nolle duobus,
"Corque sibi alterna dant capiuntque manu;
"Esse quid hoc dicam *Juli*, et tu maxime *Laurens*,
"Anne duos una mente calere putem?"
Pol. lib. Epigram, in Op. Ald. 1498.

CHAP. III. 1470. Prato, a part of the Florentine dominions, was one of the first events that called for the interposition of the republick. A body of soldiers was despatched to the relief of the place, but the intrepidity of Cesare Petrucci, the chief magistrate, assisted by Giorgio Ginori, a Florentine citizen and knight of Rhodes, had rendered further assistance unnecessary; and Bernado being made prisoner, was sent to Florence, where he paid with his life the forfeit of his folly[f]. Being interrogated previous to his execution, as to his motives for making such an attempt with so small a number of followers, and such little probability of success, he replied, that having determined rather to die in Florence than to live longer in exile, he wished to ennoble his death by some splendid action[g]. No sooner had this alarm subsided, than apprehensions arose of a much more formidable nature. Pursuing his destructive conquests, the Turkish emperour, Mahomet II. had attacked the island of Negropont, which composed a part of the Venetian territory, and after a dreadful slaughter of both Turks and Christians, had taken the capital city by storm, and put the inhabitants to the

[f] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *fi.* 107.

[g] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 7.

the sword[h]. Encouraged by success, he vowed not to lay down his arms until he had abolished the religion of Christ, and extirpated all his followers. A strong sense of common danger is perhaps of all others the most powerful incentive to concord, and the selfish views of the Italian states were for a short time lost in the contemplation of this destructive enemy, whose success was equally dreaded by the prince, the scholar, and the priest. In the month of December 1470, a league was solemnly concluded, for the common defence, between the pope, the king of Naples, the duke of Milan, and the Florentines, to which almost all the other states of Italy acceded[i]. In the same month Lorenzo de' Medici received a further proof of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, in being appointed syndick of the republick, by virtue of which authority he bestowed upon Buongianni Gianfiliazzi, then Gonfaloniere, the order of knighthood in the church of S. Reparata[k]. CHAP. III. League against the Turks.

The multiplicity of his publick concerns did not prevent Lorenzo from attending to his domestick affairs, and taking the necessary precautions Riches of the Medici.

[h] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 507.

[i] *Ib. p.* 508.

[k] *Amm. Ist. Fior, v.* iii. *p.* 107.

CHAP. III.

cautions for continuing with advantage those branches of commerce which had proved so lucrative to his ancestors. Such were the profits which they had derived from these sources, that besides the immense riches which the family actually possessed, the ancestors of Lorenzo had in a course of thirty-seven years, computing from the return of Cosmo from banishment in 1434, expended in works of publick charity or utility, upwards of 660,000 florins; a sum which Lorenzo himself justly denominates incredible, and which may serve to give us a striking idea of the extensive traffick by which such munificence could be supported[1]. In relating this circumstance, Lorenzo gives his hearty sanction to the manner in which this money had been employed. *Some persons would perhaps think*, says he, in his private Ricordi, *that it would be more desirable to have a part of it in their purse; but I conceive it has been a great advantage to the publick, and well laid out, and am therefore perfectly satisfied.* Of this sum the principal part had been acquired and expended by Cosmo de' Medici, who had carried on, in conjunction with his brother Lorenzo, a very extensive trade, as well in Florence as in foreign parts. On the death

[1] *Ricordi di Lor. de' Med. in App. No.* XII.

death of Lorenzo, in the year 1440, his pro- CHAP. portion of the riches thus obtained, which III. amounted in the whole to upwards of 235,000 florins, was inherited by his son Pier Francesco de' Medici, for whose use Cosmo retained it until the year 1451, when a distribution took place between the two families. From that time it was agreed, that the traffick of the family should be carried on for the joint benefit of Pier Francesco, and of Piero and Giovanni, the sons of Cosmo, who were to divide the profits in equal shares of one third to each, and immense riches were thus acquired[m]; but whilst Cosmo and his descendants expended a great part of their wealth in the service of the country, and supported the hereditary dignity of chiefs of the republick, Pier Francesco preferred a private life, and, equally remote from the praise of munificence or the reproach of ostentation, transmitted to his descendants so ample a patrimony, as enabled them, in concurrence with other favourable circumstances, to establish a permanent authority in Florence, and finally to overturn the liberties of their native place.

Of

[m] *Ricordi di Lor. de' Med. in Appx. No.* XII.

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Their commercial concerns.

Of the particular branch of traffick by which the Medici acquired their wealth, little information remains; but there is no doubt that a considerable portion of it arose from the trade which the Florentines, in the early part of the fifteenth century, began to carry on to Alexandria for the productions of the east, in which they attempted to rival the states of Genoa and of Venice. To this they were induced by the representations of Taddeo di Cenni, who having resided at Venice, and being apprized of the advantages which that city derived from the traffick in spices and other eastern merchandise, prevailed upon his countrymen, in the year 1421, to aim at a participation in the trade. Six new officers were accordingly created, under the title of maritime consuls, who were to prepare at the port of Leghorn (the dominion of which city the Florentines had then lately obtained by purchase) two large galleys and six guard-ships[n]. In the following year the Florentines entered on their new commerce with great solemnity. A publick procession took place, and the divine favour, which had always accompanied their domestick undertakings, was solicited upon their maritime

[n] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* ii. *p.* 994.

maritime concerns. At the same time the first armed vessel of the republick was fitted out on a voyage for Alexandria, in which twelve young men of the chief families in Florence engaged to proceed, for the purpose of obtaining experience in naval affairs. Carlo Federighi and Felice Brancacci were appointed ambassadours to the sultan, and were provided with rich presents to conciliate his favour. The embassy was eminently successful. Early in the following year the ambassadours returned, having obtained permission to form a commercial establishment at Alexandria, for the convenience of their trade, and with the extraordinary privilege of erecting a church for the exercise of their religion[o]. In this branch of traffick, which was of a very lucrative nature, and carried on to a great extent, the Medici were deeply engaged, and reciprocal presents of rare or curious articles were exchanged between them and the sultans, which sufficiently indicate their friendly intercourse.

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Besides the profits derived from their mercantile concerns, the wealth of the Medici was obtained

Other sources of their revenue.

[o] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* ii. *p.* 999.

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obtained through many other channels. A very large income arose to Cosmo and his descendants from their extensive farms at Poggio-Cajano, Caffagiolo, and other places, which were cultivated with great assiduity, and made a certain and ample return. The mines of allum in different parts of Italy were either the property of the Medici, or were hired by them from their respective owners, so that they were enabled almost to monopolize this article, and to render it highly lucrative. For a mine in the Roman territory it appears that they paid to the papal see the annual rent of 100,000 florins[p]. But perhaps the principal sources of the riches of this family arose from the commercial banks which they had established in almost all the trading cities of Europe, and which were conducted by agents in whom they placed great confidence. At a time when the rate of interest frequently depended on the necessities of the borrower, and was in most cases very exorbitant, an inconceivable profit must have been derived from these establishments, which, as we have before noticed, were at times resorted to for pecuniary assistance by the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. In

[p] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 39. 182.

CHAP. III.

The duke of Milan visits Florence.

1471.

In the month of March 1471, Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan, accompanied by his duchess Bona, sister of Amadeo, duke of Savoy, paid a visit to Florence, where they took up their residence with Lorenzo de' Medici; but their attendants, who were very numerous, were accommodated at the publick charge[q]. Not sufficiently gratified by the admiration of his own subjects, Galeazzo was desirous of displaying his magnificence in the eyes of the Florentines, and of partaking with them in the spectacles and amusements with which their city abounded. His equipage was accordingly in the highest style of splendour and expense[r]; but notwithstanding this

[q] They consisted of one hundred men at arms, and five hundred infantry as a guard, fifty running footmen richly dressed in silk and silver, and so many noblemen and courtiers, that, with their different retinues, they amounted to two thousand horsemen. Five hundred couple of dogs, with an infinite number of falcons and hawks, completed the pageantry.

Amm. Ist. Fior. v. iii. *fl.* 108.

[r] Muratori, (*Annali d' Italia, v.* ix. *fl.* 511.) after Corio (*Ist. di Milano,*) informs us, that this journey was undertaken by Galeazzo under the pretext of the performance of a vow. Valori supposes that the motive of the duke was to confirm the authority of Lorenzo in Florence. Galeazzo was not remarkable either for his piety or his prudence;

CHAP. III. this profusion, his wonder, and perhaps his envy, was excited by the superiour magnificence of Lorenzo, which was of a kind not always in the power of riches to procure. Galeazzo observed with admiration the extensive collection of the finest remains of ancient art, which had been selected throughout all Italy for a long course of years with equal assiduity and expense. He examined with apparent pleasure the great variety of statues, vases, gems, and intaglios, with which the palace of Lorenzo was ornamented, and in which the value of the materials was often excelled by the exquisite skill of the workmanship; but he was more particularly gratified by the paintings, the productions of the best masters of the times, and owned that he had seen a greater number of excellent pictures in that place, than he had found throughout the rest of Italy. With the same attention he examined the celebrated collection of manuscripts, drawings, and other curious articles of which Lorenzo was possessed; and notwithstanding his predilection for courtly grandeur, had the taste, or the address,

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prudence; and it seems more probable that this excursion was undertaken merely to gratify his vanity, which he did at the expense of 200,000 gold ducats. In tracing the motives of conduct, historians frequently forget how many are to be sought for in the follies of mankind.

address, to acknowledge, that in comparison with what he had seen, gold and silver lost their value. The arrival of the duke at Florence seems to have been the signal for general riot and dissipation. Machiavelli affects to speak with horrour of the irregular conduct of him and of his courtiers: and remarks, with a gravity that might well have become a more dutiful son of the church, that this was the first time that an open disregard was avowed in Florence of the prohibition of eating flesh in lent[a]. For the amusement of the duke and his attendants three publick spectacles were exhibited; one of which was the annunciation of the virgin, another the ascension of Christ, and the third the descent of the holy spirit. The last was exhibited in the church of the S. Spirito; and as it required the frequent use of fire, the building caught the flames, and was entirely consumed—a circumstance which the piety of the populace attributed to the evident displeasure of Heaven.

Lorenzo devotes his leisure to literature.

There is however abundant reason to believe that Lorenzo was induced to engage in the avocations and amusements before mentioned, rather by necessity than by choice, and that his happiest hours

[a] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 7.

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hours were those which he was permitted to devote to the exercise of his talents, and the improvement of his understanding, or which were enlivened by the conversation of those eminent men who sometimes assembled under his roof in Florence, and occasionally accompanied him to his seats at Fiesole, Careggi, or Caffagiolo. Those who shared his more immediate favour, were Marsilio Ficino, the three brothers of the family of Pulci, and Matteo Franco; but of all his literary friends, Politiano was the most particularly distinguished. It has been said that this eminent scholar was educated under the protection of Cosmo de' Medici; but at the death of Cosmo he was only ten years of age, having been born on the fourteenth day of July, 1454. Politiano was indebted for his education to Piero, or rather to Lorenzo de' Medici, whom he always considered as his peculiar patron, and to whom he felt himself bound by every tie of gratitude[t]. The place of his birth

Angelo Politiano.

[t] Ficino, addressing himself to Lorenzo, denominates Politiano "Angelus Politianus noster, *alumnus tuus*, acer-"rimo vir judicio." And Politiano himself says, "In-"nutritus autem *penè à puero* sum castissimis illis pene-"tralibus magni viri, et in hac sua florentissima republica "principis Laurenti Medicis."

Pol. Ep. ad Johannem Regem Portugalliæ. in Ep. lib. x. *Ep.* 1.

birth was Monte-Pulciano, or *Mons-Politianus*, a small town in the territory of Florence[u], whence he derived his name, having discontinued that of his family, which has given rise to great diversity of conjecture respecting it[v]. The father of Politiano, CHAP. III.

[u] *Monte-Pulciano* is remarkable also for producing the best wine not only in Italy, but in Europe. In the Ditirambo of Redi, Bacchus, after enumerating every known species of wine, declares, by a definitive sentence, that

Monte-Pulciano d'ogni vino è il Rè.

[v] Some authors have given him the name of *Angelus Bassus*, but more modern criticks have contended that his real name was *Cini*, being a contraction of *Ambrogini*. (*Menage Antibaillet*, *lib.* i. *c.* 14. *Bayle Dict. Hist. Art. Politien.*) Menckenius, in his laborious history of the life of this author, employs his first chapter in ascertaining his real name, and constantly denominates him *Angelus Ambroginus Politianus*. The Abate Serassi, in his life of Politiano, prefixed to the edition of his Italian poems by Comino, (*Padua*, 1765,) is also of opinion, that the name of *Bassus* is supposititious, and endeavours, on the authority of Salvini, to account for the rise of the mistake. Notwithstanding these respectable authorities, indisputable evidence remains, that in the early part of his life Politiano denominated himself, by the Latin appellation of *Bassus*. Not to rely on the epigram "*ad Bassum*," printed

CHAP. LII. Politiano, though not wealthy, was a doctor of the civil law, which may be an answer to the many invidious tales as to the meanness of his birth. On his arrival at Florence he applied himself with great diligence to the study of the Latin language under Cristoforo Landino, and of the Greek, under Andronicus of Thessalonica. Ficino and Argyropylus were his instructers in the different systems of the Platonick and Aristotelian philosophy; but poetry had irresistible allurements for his young mind, and his *stanze* on the Giostra of Giuliano, if they did not first recommend him to the notice of Lorenzo, certainly obtained his approbation, and secured his favour.

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printed amongst his works, and certainly addressed to him, which Menckenius supposes led Vossius into his errour, we have the most decisive evidence on this subject from different *memoranda* in the hand-writing of Politiano yet remaining in the Laurentian library, which I shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to state, and in which he subscribes his name *Angelus Bassus Politianus*. Bandini, who has had every possible opportunity of information on this subject, accordingly gives him that denomination. (*Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 172.) That *Bassus* was an academical name, assumed by Politiano in his youth, might be contended with some degree of probability. De Bure has given him the name of *Jean Petit* (*Bibliogr. Instr. v.* iv. *p.* 271.) in which absurdity he was preceded by another of his countrymen, Guy Patin.

favour[w]. The friendship of Lorenzo provided for all his wants, and enabled him to prosecute his studies free from the embarrassments and interruptions of pecuniary affairs[x]. He was early enrolled among the citizens of Florence, and appointed secular prior of the college of S. Giovanni. He afterwards entered into clerical orders, and having obtained the degree of doctor

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[w] Etenim ego tenera adhuc ætate sub duobus excellentissimis hominibus, Marsilio Ficino Florentino et Argyropulo Bizantino Peripateticorum sui temporis, longe clarissimo, dabam quidem philosophiæ utrique operam, sed non admodum assiduam; videlicet ad Homeri poetæ blandimenta natura et ætate proclivior.

Pol. in fine Miscell.

[x] Omnia tibi ad ingenue philosophandum adjumenta suppeditat favor ac gratia Laurentii Medices, maximi hac tempestate studiorum patroni: qui missis per universum terrarum nunciis, in omni disciplinarum genere libros conquirit, nulli sumptui parcit, quo tibi ac reliquis præclaris ingeniis, bonarum artium studia æmulantibus, instrumenta abundantissima paret. (*Nic. Leonicenus ad Pol. in Pol. Ep. lib.* ii. *Ep.* 7.) Nor did Politiano hesitate, upon occasion, to trouble his patron with his personal wants. From one of his epigrams it appears that his inattention to dress had rendered it necessary for him to request immediate assistance from Lorenzo's wardrobe; and from another we find that such assistance was not denied him. These epigrams merit a place in the Appendix, *vide No.* XVII.

CHAP. III. doctor of the civil law, was nominated a canon of the cathedral of Florence. Intrusted by Lorenzo with the education of his children, and the care of his extensive collection of manuscripts and antiquities, he constantly resided under his roof, and was his inseparable companion at those hours which were not devoted to the more important concerns of the state.

His temper and character.

Respecting the temper and character of Politiano, his epistles afford us ample information. In one of these, addressed to Matteo Corvino king of Hungary, a monarch eminently distinguished by his encouragement of learned men, he hesitates not, whilst he pays a just tribute of gratitude to the kindness of Lorenzo, to claim the merit due to his own industry and talents[y]. *From a humble situation*, says he, *I have, by the favour and friendship of Lorenzo de' Medici, been raised to some degree of rank and celebrity, without any other recommendation than my proficiency in literature. During many years I have not only taught in Florence the Latin tongue with great approbation, but even in the Greek language I have contended with the Greeks themselves—a species of merit that I may boldly say has not been attained*

[y] *Pol. Ep. lib.* ix. *Ep.* 1.

attained by any of my countrymen for a thousand years past. In the intercourse which Politiano maintained with the learned men of his time, he appears to have been sufficiently conscious of his own superiority. The letters addressed to him by his friends were in general well calculated to gratify his vanity; but although he was in a high degree jealous of his literary reputation, he was careful to distinguish how far the applauses bestowed upon him were truly merited, and how far they were intended to conciliate his favour. If he did not always estimate himself by the good opinion entertained of him by others, he did not suffer himself to be depressed by their envy or their censure[z]. *I am no more raised or dejected,* says he, *by the flattery of my friends, or the accusations of my adversaries, than I am by the shadow of my own body; for although that shadow may be somewhat longer in the morning and the evening than it is in the middle of the day, this will scarcely induce me to think myself a taller man at those times than I am at noon.*

The impulse which Lorenzo de' Medici had given to the cause of letters soon began to be felt

[z] *Pol. Ep. lib.* iii. *Ep.* 24.

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felt not only by those who immediately surrounded him, but throughout the Tuscan territories, and from thence it extended itself to the rest of Italy. By the liberal encouragement which he held out to men of learning, and still more by his condescension and affability, he attracted them from all parts of that country to Florence; so that it is scarcely possible to name an Italian of that age, distinguished by his proficiency in any branch of literature, that has not shared the attention or partaken of the bounty of Lorenzo.

Death of Paul II.

Paul II. between whom and the family of the Medici there subsisted an irreconcilable enmity, died on the 26th of July 1471, leaving behind him the character of an ostentatious, profligate, and illiterate priest. This antipathy, which took place in the lifetime of Piero de' Medici, though Fabroni supposes it arose after his death[a], was occasioned by the ambition of Paul, who under the influence of motives to which we have before adverted, was desirous of possessing himself of the city of Rimini, then held by Roberto, the natural son of Gismondo Malatesti, whose virtues had obliterated in the eyes

[a] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 29.

eyes of the citizens the crimes of his father[b]. Finding his pretensions opposed, Paul attempted to enforce them by the sword, and prevailed upon his countrymen the Venetians to afford him their assistance. Roberto had resorted for succour to the Medici, and by their interference the Roman and Venetian troops were speedily opposed in the field by a formidable army, led by the duke of Urbino, and supported by the duke of Calabria and Roberto Sanseverino. An engagement took place, which terminated in the total rout of the army of the pope, who, dreading the resentment of so powerful an alliance, acceded to such terms as the conquerors thought proper to dictate; not however without bitterly inveighing against the Medici for the part they had taken in opposing his ambitious project.

Paul a persecutor of learned men.

During the pontificate of Paul II. letters and science experienced at Rome a cruel and unrelenting persecution, and their professors exhibited in their sufferings a degree of constancy and resolution, which in another cause might have advanced them to the rank of martyrs. The

[b] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *fl.* 105. *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *fl.* 505.

CHAP. III. The imprisonment of the historian Platina, who on being arbitrarily deprived of a respectable office to which he was appointed by Pius II. had dared to thunder in the ears of the pope the dreaded name of a general council, might perhaps admit of some justification; but this was only a prelude to the devastation which Paul made amongst the men of learning, who, during his pontificate, had chosen the city of Rome as their residence[c]. A number of these uniting together, had formed a society for the research of antiquities, chiefly with a view to elucidate the works of the ancient authors, from medals, inscriptions, and other remains of art. As an incitement to, or as characteristick of their studies, they had assumed classick names, and thereby gave the first instance of a practice which has since become general among the academicians of Italy. Whilst these men were employing themselves in a manner that did honour to their age and country, Paul was indulging his folly and his vanity in ridiculous and contemptible exhibitions[d]; and happy had it been if he had confined

[c] *Platina nella vita di Paolo* II. *Muratori Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 508.

[d] Correvano i vecchi, correvano i giovani, correvano quelli che erano di mezza età, correvano i giudei, e li facevano

confined his attention to these amusements; but on the pretext of a conspiracy against his person, he seized upon many members of the academy, which he pretended to consider as a dangerous and seditious assembly, accusing them of having, by their adoption of heathen names, marked their aversion to the Christian religion. Such of them as were so unfortunate as to fall into his hands he committed to prison, where they underwent the torture, in order to draw from them a confession of crimes which had no existence, and of heretical opinions which they had never avowed. Not being able to obtain any evidence of their guilt, and finding that they had resolution to suffer the last extremity rather than accuse themselves, Paul thought proper at length to acquit them of the charge, but at the same time, by a wanton abuse of power, he ordered that they should be detained in

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facevano ben saturare prima, perchè meno veloci corressero. Correvano i cavalli, le cavalle, gli asini, e i buffali con piacere di tutti, che per le risa grandi potevano appena star le genti in pie. Il correre che si faceva, era dall' arco di Domiziano sino alla chiesa di S. Marco, dove stava il papa, che supremo gusto e piacere di queste feste prendeva; e dopo il corso usava anche a fanciulli, lordi tutti di fango, questa cortesia, che ad ogni uno di loro faceva dare un carlino. *Plat. ut sup.*

CHAP. III. in prison during a complete year from the time of their commitment, alleging that he did it to fulfil a vow which he had made when he first imprisoned them[e].

Succeeded by Sixtus IV.

To Paul II. succeeded Francesco della Rovere, a Franciscan monk, who assumed the name of Sixtus IV. His knowledge of theology and the canon law had not conciliated the favour of the populace; for during the splendid ceremony of his coronation a tumult arose in the city, in which his life was endangered[f]. To congratulate him on his elevation, an embassy of six of the most eminent citizens was deputed from Florence, at the head of which was Lorenzo de' Medici. Between Lorenzo and the pope mutual instances of good-will took place; and Lorenzo, who under the direction of his agents had a bank established at Rome, was formally invested with the office of treasurer of the holy see, an appointment which greatly contributed to enrich his maternal uncle, Giovanni Tornabuoni, who, whilst he executed that office on behalf of Lorenzo, had an opportunity of purchasing from

Lorenzo deputed to congratulate him.

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[e] *Platina nella vita di Paolo* II.—*Zeno. Dissert. Voss. Art. Platina—Tirab. Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* vi. *par.* i. *p.* 82.

[f] *Muratori Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 511.

from Sixtus many of the rich jewels that had been collected by Paul II. which he sold to different princes of Europe to great emolument[g]. During this visit Lorenzo made further additions to the many valuable specimens of ancient sculpture, of which, by the diligence of his ancestors, he was already possessed. On his return to Florence he brought with him two busts, in marble, of Augustus and Agrippa, which were presented to him by the pope, with many cameos and medals, of the excellence of which he was an exquisite judge[h]. In the warmth of his admiration for antiquity, he could not refrain from condemning the barbarism of Paul, who had demolished a part of the Flavian amphitheatre in order to build a church to S. Marco[i]. At this interview it is probable that Lorenzo solicited from Sixtus the promise of a cardinal's hat for his brother, and it is certain that he afterwards used his endeavours to obtain for Giuliano a seat in the sacred college, through the medium of the Florentine envoy at Rome; but the circumstances of the times, and the different temper of the pope and of

[g] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 38.
[h] *Ricordi di Lor. in App. No.* XII.
[i] *Fabroni in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 40.

CHAP. III. of Lorenzo, soon put an end to all friendly intercourse between them, and an enmity took place which was productive of the most sanguinary consequences.

Revolt and sackage of Volterra.

Soon after the return of Lorenzo to Florence, a disagreement arose between that republick and the city of Volterra, which composed a part of its dominions. A mine of alum had been discovered within the district of Volterra, which being at first considered as of small importance, was suffered to remain in the hands of individual proprietors; but it afterwards appearing to be very lucrative, the community of Volterra claimed a share of the profits as part of their municipal revenue. The proprietors appealed to the magistrates of Florence, who discountenanced the pretensions of the city of Volterra, alleging, that if the profits of the mine were to be applied to the use of the publick, they ought to become a part of the general revenue of the government, and not of any particular district. This determination gave great offence to the citizens of Volterra, who resolved not only to persevere in their claims, but also to free themselves if possible, from their subjection to the Florentines. A general commotion took place at Volterra. Such was the violence of the insurgents, that they put to death several of their

their own citizens who disapproved of their intemperate proceedings. Even the Florentine commissary, Piero Malegonelle, narrowly escaped with his life. This revolt excited great alarm at Florence, not from the idea that the citizens of Volterra were powerful enough to succeed in an attempt which they had previously made at four different times without success, but from an apprehension that if a contest took place, it might afford a pretext for the pope or the king of Naples to interfere on the occasion. Hence a great diversity of opinion prevailed amongst the magistrates and council of Florence, some of whom, particularly Tomaso Soderini, strongly recommended conciliatory measures. This advice was opposed by Lorenzo de' Medici, who, from the enormities already committed at Volterra, was of opinion that the most speedy and vigorous means ought to be adopted to repress the commotion. In justification of this apparent severity, he remarked, that in violent disorders, where death could only be prevented by bold and decisive measures, those physicians were the most cruel, who appeared to be the most compassionate. His advice was adopted by the council, and preparations were made to suppress the revolt by force. The inhabitants of Volterra exerted themselves to put the city in a state of defence, and made earnest applications for

CHAP. III.

for assistance to the neighbouring governments. About a thousand soldiers were hired and received within the walls, to assist in supporting the expected attack; but the Florentines having surrounded the place with a numerous army[k], under the command of the count of Urbino, the citizens soon surrendered at discretion. The Florentine commissaries took possession of the palace, and enjoined the magistrates to repair peaceably to their houses. One of them on his return was insulted and plundered by a soldier; and notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the duke of Urbino, who afterwards put to death the offender, this incident led the way to a general sackage of the city, the soldiers who had engaged in its defence uniting with the conquerors in despoiling and plundering the unfortunate inhabitants. Lorenzo was no sooner apprized of this event than he hastened to Volterra, where he endeavoured to repair the injuries done to the inhabitants, and to alleviate their distresses by every method in his power[l]. Although

[k] Ten thousand foot and two thousand horse, according to Machiavelli, (*lib.* 7.) but Ammirato, with more probability, enumerates them at five thousand of the former and five hundred of the latter.

Ist. Fior. v. iii. *fl.* 3.

[l] *Fabr. in vitâ, v.* i. *fl.* 45.

Although the unhappy termination of this affair arose from an incident, which as the sagacity of Lorenzo could not foresee, so his precaution could not prevent, yet it is highly probable, from the earnestness which he shewed to repair the calamity, that it gave him no small share of regret. Nor has he on this occasion escaped the censure of a contemporary historian, who being himself an inhabitant of Volterra, probably shared in those distresses of which he considered Lorenzo as the author, and has therefore, on this and on other occasions, shewn a disposition unfriendly to his character[m]. CHAP. III.

1472.

About the close of the following year, great apprehensions of a famine arose in Florence, and five citizens were appointed to take the necessary precautions for supplying the place. The dreadful effects of this calamity were however obviated, principally by the attention of Lorenzo, who shortly afterwards took a journey to Pisa, where he made a long residence[n]. The object of this visit

Lorenzo establishes the academy of Pisa.

[m] *Raffaelle da Volterra, in Commentar. Urban. Geogr. lib. 5. p.* 138. *Ed. Lugd.* 1552.

[n] The coincidence of these circumstances is adverted to in an epigram of Politiano, whose poems illustrate almost all the principal incidents in the life of Lorenzo: "Cum

CHAP. III. visit was the reestablishment and regulation of the academy of that place, which, after having existed nearly two centuries, and having been celebrated for the abilities of its professors, and the number of its students, had fallen into disrepute and neglect. An institution of a similar nature had been founded in Florence in 1348—a year rendered remarkable by the dreadful pestilence of which Boccacio has left so affecting a narrative; but Florence was on many accounts an improper situation for this purpose. The scarcity of habitations, the high price of provisions, and the consequent expense of education, had greatly diminished the number of students, whilst the amusements with which that place abounded were unfavourable to a proficiency in serious acquirements. Sensible of these disadvantages, the Florentines, who had held the dominion of Pisa from the year 1406, resolved to establish the academy

"Cum commissa sibi tellus malefida negasset
"Semina, et agricolæ falleret herba fidem,
"Protinus optatas patriæ tua dextera fruges
"Obtulit, et celerem jussit abire famem.
"Nec mora, Piseis commutas sedibus urbem
"Servatam, et nimio tempore lentus abes.
"Heu quid agis? Patriæ *Laurens* te redde gementi.
"Non facta est donis lætior illa tuis.
"Mœsta dolet, malletque famem perferre priorem,
"Quam desiderium patria ferre tui."

Pol. in lib. Epigr.

academy of that place in its former splendour. Lorenzo de' Medici and four other citizens were appointed to superintend the execution of their purpose[o]; but Lorenzo, who was the projector of the plan, undertook the chief direction of it, and in addition to the six thousand florins annually granted by the state, expended, in effecting his purpose, a large sum of money from his private fortune. Amongst the professors at Pisa were speedily found some of the most eminent scholars of the age, particularly in the more serious and important branches of science. At no period have the professors of literature been so highly rewarded[p]. The dissensions and misconduct

CHAP. III.

[o] The other deputies were Tomaso de' Ridolfi, Donato degli Acciajuoli, (after whose death his place was supplied by Piero Minerbetti,) Andrea de' Puccini, and Alamanno de' Rinuccini. *Fabron. in vitâ Laur. p.* 50. This author, who was lately, and perhaps is yet, at the head of the Pisan academy, has, in his life of Lorenzo, given a very full account of its renovation, and of the different professors who have contributed towards its celebrity.

[p] The teachers of the civil and canon law were Bartolommeo Mariano Soccini, Baldo Bartolini, Lancelotto and Filippo Tristano, Pier Filippo Corneo, Felice Sandeo, and Francesco Accolti; all of whom had great professional reputation. In the department of medicine we find the names

CHAP. III. misconduct of these teachers, whose arrogance was at least equal to their learning, gave Lorenzo no small share of anxiety, and often called for his personal interference[q]. His absence from his native place was a frequent cause of regret to Politiano, who consoled himself by composing verses expressive of his affection for Lorenzo, and

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names of Albertino de Chizzoli, Alessandro Sermoneta, Giovanni d' Aquila, and Pier Leoni. In philosophy, Nicolo Tignosi. In polite letters, Lorenzo Lippi and Bartolommeo da Prato. In divinity, Domenico di Flandria and Bernardino Cherichini. Of these the civilians had the highest salaries—that of Soccini was 700 florins annually; that of Baldo 1050, and that of Accolti 1440.

[q] Forgetful of the *jus gentium* which it was his province to teach, Soccini made an attempt to evade his engagements at Pisa, and to carry off with him to Venice sundry books and property of the academy intrusted to his care, which he had artfully concealed in wine casks. Being taken and brought to Florence, he was there condemned to death; but Lorenzo exerted his authority to prevent the execution of the sentence, alleging as a reason for his interference, that *so accomplished a scholar ought not to suffer an ignominious death.* An observation which may shew his veneration for science, but which will scarcely be found sufficient to exculpate a man whose extensive knowledge rather aggravated than alleviated his offence. Soccini, however, not only escaped punishment, but in the space of three years was reinstated in his professorship, with a salary of 1000 florins.

and soliciting his speedy return[r]. To this circumstance we are however indebted for several of the familiar letters of Lorenzo that have reached posterity, many of which have been published with those of Ficino, and perhaps derive some advantage from a comparison with the epistles of the philosopher, whose devotion to his favourite studies is frequently carried to an absurd extreme, and whose flattery is sometimes so apparent as to call for the reprehension even of Lorenzo himself[s]. CHAP. III.

The increasing authority of Lorenzo, and his importance in the affairs of Europe, now began to be more apparent. In the year 1473, he took part in a negotiation, which, had it been successful, might have preserved Italy from many years of devastation, and at all events must have given a different complexion to the affairs not only of that country, but of Europe. Louis XI. of France, who laid the foundation of that despotism which, after having existed for

1473.

Negotiation for a marriage between the dauphin and a daughter of the king of Naples.

[r] I give the following for its conciseness rather than its merit:

"Invideo Pisis Laurenti, nec tamen odi,
"Ne mihi displiceat quæ tibi terra placet."

Pol. in lib. Epigr.

[s] "Scribis ut in te laudando posthæc parcior esse "velim," &c. *Fic. ad Laur. in Ep. Fic. p.* 34. *Ed.* 1502.

CHAP. III.

for three centuries, was at length expiated in the blood of the most guiltless of his descendants, and whose views were uniformly directed towards the aggrandizement of his dominions and the depression of his subjects, was desirous of connecting his family with that of Ferdinand king of Naples, by the marriage of his eldest son with a daughter of that prince. To this end he conceived it necessary to address himself to some person, whose general character, and influence with Ferdinand, might promote his views, and for that purpose he selected Lorenzo de' Medici. The confidential letter from Louis to Lorenzo on this occasion is yet extant, and affords some striking traits of the character of this ambitious, crafty, and suspicious monarch[t]. After expressing his high opinion of Lorenzo, and his unshaken attachment to him, he gives him to understand, that he is informed a negotiation is on foot for a marriage between the eldest daughter of the king of Naples and the duke of Savoy, upon which the king was to give her a portion of 300,000 ducats. Without apologizing for his interference, he then mentions his desire that a connexion of this nature should take place between the princess and

[t] For this letter, first published by Fabroni, *v. App.* No. XVIII.

and his eldest son the dauphin, and requests that Lorenzo would communicate his wishes to the king of Naples. To this proposal Louis stipulates as a condition, that Ferdinand should, in consequence of such alliance, not only assist him in his contest with the house of Anjou, but also against the king of Spain, and his other enemies; alluding to the duke of Burgundy, whom he was then attempting to despoil of his dominions. After making further arrangements respecting the proposed nuptials, he requests that Lorenzo would send some confidential person to reside with him for a time, and to return to Florence as often as might be requisite, but with particular injunctions that he should have no intercourse with any of the French nobility or princes of the blood. The conclusion of the letter conveys a singular request; conscious of his guilt, Louis distrusted all his species, and he desires that Lorenzo would furnish him with a large dog, of a particular breed, which he was known to possess, for the purpose of attending on his person and guarding his bed-chamber[n]. Notwithstanding the apparent seriousness with which Louis proposes to connect his family by marriage

CHAP. III.

[n] —— Vigilum canum
Tristes excubiæ. HOR.

CHAP. III.

marriage with that of the king of Naples, it is probable that such proposal was only intended to delay or prevent the marriage of the princess with the duke of Savoy. Whether Ferdinand considered it in this light, or whether he had other reasons to suspect the king of France of sinister or ambitious views, he returned a speedy answer[v], in which, after the warmest professions of personal esteem for Lorenzo, and after expressing his thorough sense of the honour he should derive from an alliance with a monarch who might justly be esteemed the greatest prince on earth, he rejects the proposition on account of the conditions that accompanied it; declaring that no private considerations should induce him to interrupt the friendship subsisting between him and his ally the duke of Burgundy, or his relation the king of Spain; and that he would rather lose his kingdom, and even his life, than suffer such an imputation upon his honour and his character. If in his reply he has alleged the true reasons for declining a connexion apparently so advantageous to him, it must be confessed that his sentiments do honour to his memory. The magnanimity of Ferdinand affords a striking contrast to the meanness and duplicity of Louis

Ferdinand declines the proposal.

[v] *v. Appx. No.* XIX.

Louis XI. It is scarcely necessary to add that the proposed union never took place. The dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII., married the accomplished daughter of the duke of Bretagne, and some years afterwards expelled the family of his once-intended father-in-law from their dominions, under the pretence of a will, made in favour of Louis XI. by a count of Provence, one of that very family of Anjou, against whose claims Louis had himself proposed to defend the king of Naples.

Ambition and rapacity of Sixtus IV.

Sixtus IV. at the time he ascended the pontifical chair, had several sons, upon whom, in the character of nephews, he afterwards bestowed the most important offices and the highest dignities of the church. The indecency of Sixtus, in thus lavishing upon his spurious offspring the riches of the Roman see, could only be equaled by their profuseness in dissipating them. Piero Riario, in whose person were united the dignities of cardinal of S. Sisto, patriarch of Constantinople, and archbishop of Florence, expended at a single entertainment in Rome, given by him in honour of the dutchess of Ferrara, 20,000 ducats, and afterwards made a tour through Italy with such a degree of splendour, and so numerous a retinue, that the pope himself could

CHAP. III. could not have displayed greater magnificence[w]. His brother Girolamo was dignified with the appellation of count; and that it might not be regarded as an empty title, 40,000 ducats were expended in purchasing from the family of Manfredi the territory of Imola, of which he obtained possession[x], and to which he afterwards added the dominion of Forli. The city of Castello became no less an object of the ambition of Sixtus; but instead of endeavouring to possess himself of it by compact, he made an attempt to wrest it by force from Niccolo Vitelli, who then held the sovereignty; for which purpose he despatched against it another of his equivocal relations, Giuliano della Rovere, who afterwards became pope under the name of Julius II., and who, in the character of a military cardinal, had just before sacked the city of Spoleto, and put the inhabitants to the sword. Niccolo, having obtained the assistance of the duke of Milan and of the Florentines, made a vigorous defence, and, though obliged at length to capitulate, obtained respectable terms. His long resistance was attributed by the pope, and not without reason, to Lorenzo de' Medici, who,

[w] *Muratori Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 515. [x] *Ibid. p.* 516.

who, independent of his private regard for Niccolo, could not be an indifferent spectator of an unprovoked attack upon a place which immediately bordered on the territories of Florence, and greatly contributed towards their security[y]. These depredations, which were supposed to be countenanced by the king of Naples, roused the attention of the other states of Italy; and, towards the close of the year 1474, a league was concluded at Milan between the duke, the Venetians, and the Florentines, for their mutual defence, to which neither the pope nor the king were parties; liberty was however reserved for those potentates to join in the league if they thought proper; but this they afterwards refused, probably considering this article of the treaty as inserted rather for the purpose of deprecating their resentment, than with the expectation of their acceding to the compact[z]. CHAP. III.

League between the duke of Milan, the Venetians and the Florentines.

In this year, under the magistracy of Donato Acciajuoli, a singular visiter arrived at Florence. This was Christian, or Christiern, king of Denmark

The king of Denmark visits Florence.

[y] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *p.* 113.

[z] *Amm. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *p.* 113. *Muratori Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 518.

CHAP. III. 1474. mark and Sweden, who was journeying to Rome, for the purpose, as was alleged, of discharging a vow. He is described by the Florentine historians as of a grave aspect, with a long and white beard; and, although he was considered as a barbarian, they admit that the qualities of his mind did not derogate from the respectability of his external appearance. Having surveyed the city, and paid a ceremonial visit to the magistrates, who received their royal visiter with great splendour, he requested to be favoured with a sight of the celebrated copy of the Greek Evangelists, which had been obtained some years before from Constantinople, and of the Pandects of Justinian, brought from Amalfi to Pisa, and thence to Florence. His laudable curiosity was accordingly gratified; and he expressed his satisfaction by declaring, through the medium of his interpreter, that these were the real treasures of princes, alluding, as was supposed, to the conduct of the duke of Milan, who had attempted to dazzle him with the display of that treasure of which he had plundered his subjects, to gratify his vanity and his licentiousness; on which occasion Christian had coldly observed, that the accumulation of riches was an object below the attention of a great and magnanimous sovereign. Ammirato attempts to shew that this remark is rather specious than just; but the authority

authority of the Roman poet is in favour of the Goth[a]. It was a spectacle worthy of admiration, says the same historian, to see a king, peaceable and unarmed, pass through Italy, whose predecessors had not only overthrown the armies of that country, and harassed the kingdoms of France and of Spain, but had even broken and overturned the immense fabrick of the Roman empire itself. CHAP. III.

Progress of the Platonick academy.

If we do not implicitly join in the applauses bestowed by Landino on the professors and the tenets of the Platonick or new philosophy[b], we must not, on the contrary, conceive, that the study of these doctrines was a mere matter of speculation and curiosity. From many circumstances, there is great reason to conclude that they were applied to practical use, and had a considerable influence on the manners and the morals of the age. The object towards which mankind have always directed their aim, and in the acquisition of which every system both of religion and philosophy proposes to assist their endeavours,

[a] *Hor. lib.* ii. *Ode.* 2.

[b] Land. in proem. ad lib. 1. de vera nobilitate ad magnum vereque nobilem *Laurentium Medicem, Petri. F. ap. Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* ii. *p.* 38.

CHAP. III. endeavours, is the *summum bonum*, the greatest possible degree of attainable happiness; but in what this chief good consists has not been universally agreed upon, and this variety of opinion constitutes the essential difference between the ancient sects of philosophy. Of all these sects there was none whose tenets were so elevated and sublime, so calculated to withdraw the mind from the gratifications of sense, and the inferiour objects of human pursuit, as that of the Platonists; which, by demonstrating the imperfection of every sensual enjoyment, and every temporal blessing, rose at length to the contemplation of the supreme cause, and placed the ultimate good in a perfect abstraction from the world, and an implicit love of God. How far these doctrines may be consistent with our nature and destination, and whether such sentiments may not rather lead to a dereliction than a completion of our duty, may perhaps be doubted; but they are well calculated to attract a great and aspiring mind. Mankind, however, often arrive at the same conclusion by different means[c]; and we have in our own days seen a sect rise up, whose professors, employing a mode

[c] Sono infinite vie e differente,
E quel che si ricerca solo è uno.
Poesie di Lor. de' Medici, fl. 33. *Ed.* 1554.

mode of deduction precisely opposite to the Platonists of the fifteenth century, strongly resemble them in their sentiments and manners. Those important conclusions which the one derived from the highest cultivation of intellect, the other has found in an extreme of humiliation, and a constant degradation and contempt of all human endowments. Like navigators who steer a course directly opposite, they meet at last at the same point of the globe. And the sublime reveries of the Platonists, as they appear in the works of some of their followers, and the doctrines of the modern Methodists, are at times scarcely distinguishable in their respective writings. CHAP. III.

In this system Lorenzo had been educated from his earliest years. Of his proficiency in it he has left a very favourable specimen in a poem of no inconsiderable extent. The occasion that gave rise to this poem appears from a letter of Ficino, who undertook to give an abstract of the doctrines of Plato in prose, whilst Lorenzo agreed to attempt the same subject in verse[d]. Poem of Lorenzo, entitled *Altercazione*.

Lorenzo

[d] Cum ego ac tu nuper in agro Careggio multa de felicitate ultro citroque disputavissemus, tandem in sententiam eandem, duce ratione, convenimus. Ubi tu novas quasdam rationes, quod felicitas in voluntatis potius

CHAP. III. Lorenzo completed his task with that facility for which he was remarkable in all his compositions, and sent it to the philosopher, who performed the part he had undertaken by giving a dry and insipid epitome of the poem of Lorenzo[e]. What seems yet more extraordinary is, that Ficino, in a letter to Bernardo Rucellai, (who had married one of the sisters of Lorenzo,) transmits to him a prosaick paraphrase of the beautiful address to the Deity at the conclusion of the poem, affirming that he daily made use of it in his devotions, and recommending it to Bernardo for the like purpose. At the same time, instead of attributing the composition to its real author, he adverts to it in a manner that Bernardo might well be excused from understanding[f]. It is needless to add, that this subject appears

potius quam intellectus actu consistat, subtiliter invenisti. Placuit autem tibi, ut tu disputationem illam carminibus, ego soluta oratione conscriberem. Tu jam eleganti poemate tuum officium implevisti. Ego igitur nunc, aspirante deo, munus meum exequar quam brevissime. *Fic. Ep. lib.* 1. *p.* 38. *Ed.* 1497.

[e] Lege feliciter, Laurenti felix, quæ Marsilius Ficinus tuus; hic breviter magna ex parte a te inventa, de felicitate perstrinxit. *Ib. p.* 41.

[f] Audivi Laurentium Medicem nostrum, nonnulla horum similia ad lyram canentem, furore quodam divino, ut arbitror, concitum. *Fic. Ep. lib.* i. *p.* 41.

appears to much greater advantage in the native dress of the poet, than in the prosaick garb of the philosopher[g]. The introduction is very pleasing. The author represents himself as leaving the city, to enjoy for a few days the pleasures of a country life.

Da più dolce pensier tirato e scorto,
Fuggito avea l' aspra civil tempesta,
Per ridur l' alma in più tranquillo porto.
Così tradutto il cor da quella, a questa
Libera vita, placida, e sicura,
Che è quel po del ben ch' al mondo resta :
E per levar da mie fragil natura
Mille pensier, che fan la mente lassa,
Lassai il bel cerchio delle patrie mura.
E pervenuto in parte ombrosa, e bassa,
Amena valle che quel monte adombra,
Che'l vecchio nome per età non lassa,
La ove un verde laur' facea ombra,
Alla radice quasi del bel monte,
M'assisi ; e'l cor d' ogni pensier si sgombra.

Led

[g] Printed without date, apparently about the close of the fifteenth century, and not since reprinted, nor noticed by any bibliographer. It is entitled ALTERCATIONE OVERO DIALOGO COMPOSTO DAL MAGNIFICO LORENZO DI PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI, *nel quale si disputa tra el cittadino el pastore quale sia più felice vita o la civile o la rusticana con la determinatione facta dal philosopho dove solamente si truovi la vera felicità.* In 12°.

CHAP. III.

Led on by pensive thought, I left erewhile,
Those civil storms the restless city knows,
Pleased for a time to smooth my brow of toil,
And taste the little bliss that life bestows.
Thus with free steps my willing course I sped,
Far from the circle of my native walls;
And sought the vale with thickest foliage spread
On whose calm breast the mountain shadow falls.
Charmed with the lovely spot, I sat me down,
Where first the hill its easy slope inclined,
And every care that haunts the busy town,
Fled, as by magick, from my tranquil mind.

Whilst the poet is admiring the surrounding scenery, he is interrupted by a shepherd, who brings his flock to drink at an adjacent spring; and who, after expressing his surprise at meeting such a stranger, inquires from Lorenzo the reason of his visit.

Dimmi per qual cagion sei quì venuto?
Perchè i theatri, e i gran palazzi, e i templi
Lassi, & l' aspro sentier ti è più piaciuto?
Deh! dimmi in questi boschi hor che contempli?
Le pompe, le richezze, e le delitie,
Forse vuoi prezzar più pe' nostri exempli?
—Ed io a lui—Io non so qual divitie,
O qual honor sien più suavi, & dulci,
Che questi, fuor delle civil malitie.
Tra voi lieti pastori, tra voi bubulci,
Odio non regna alcuno, o ria perfidia,

Nè

Nè nasce ambition per questi sulci.
Il ben quì si possiede senza invidia;
Vostra avaritia ha piccola radice;
Contenti state nella lieta accidia.
Quì una per un altra non si dice;
Nè è la lingua al proprio cor contraria;
Che quel ch' oggi el fa meglio, è più felice.
Nè credo che gli avvengha in sì pura aria,
Che'l cuor sospiri, e fuor la bocca rida;
Che più saggio è chi 'l ver più copre e varia.

Thy splendid halls, thy palaces forgot,
Can paths o'erspread with thorns a charm supply;
Or dost thou seek from our severer lot,
To give to wealth and power a keener joy?
—Thus I replied—I know no happier life,
No better riches than you shepherds boast,
Freed from the hated jars of civil strife,
Alike to treachery and to envy lost.
The weed ambition midst your furrowed field
Springs not, and avarice little root can find;
Content with what the changing seasons yield,
You rest in cheerful poverty resigned.
What the heart thinks the tongue may here disclose;
Nor inward grief with outward smiles is drest.
Not like the world—where wisest he who knows
To hide the secret closest in his breast.

Comparing

CHAP. III. Comparing the amusements of the city with the more natural and striking incidents of the country, he has the following passage:

S' advien ch' un tauro con un altro giostri,
Credo non manco al cuor porgha diletto,
Che feri ludi de' theatri nostri,
E tu giudicatore, al Più perfetto
Doni verde corona, ed in vergogna
Si resta l' altro, misero, ed in dispetto.

If chance two bulls in conflict fierce engage,
And, stung by love, maintain the doubtful fight;
Say, can the revels of the crowded stage
In all its pomp afford a nobler sight?
Judge of the strife, thou weav'st a chaplet gay,
And on the conqueror's front the wreath is hung:
Abash'd the vanquish'd takes his lonely way,
And sullen and dejected moves along.

The shepherd however allows not the superiour happiness of a country life, but in reply represents, in a very forcible manner, the many hardships to which it is inevitably liable. In the midst of the debate the philosopher Marsilio approaches, to whom they agree to submit the decision of their controversy. This affords him an opportunity of explaining the philosophical tenets

tenets of Plato; in the course of which, after an inquiry into the real value of all subordinate objects and temporal acquisitions, he demonstrates, that permanent happiness is not to be sought for either in the exalted station of the one, or in the humble condition of the other, but that it is finally to be found only in the knowledge and the love of the first great cause. CHAP. III.

Platonick festival.

In order to give additional stability to these studies, Lorenzo and his friends formed the intention of renewing, with extraordinary pomp, the solemn annual feasts to the memory of the great philosopher, which had been celebrated from the time of his death to that of his disciples Plotinus and Porphyrius, but had then been discontinued for the space of twelve hundred years. The day fixed on for this purpose was the seventh of November, which was supposed to be the anniversary not only of the birth of Plato, but of his death, which happened among his friends at a convivial banquet, precisely at the close of his eighty-first year. The person appointed by Lorenzo to preside over the ceremony at Florence was Francesco Bandini, whose rank and learning rendered him extremely proper for the office. On the same day another party

CHAP. III. party met at Lorenzo's villa at Carreggi, where he presided in person. At these meetings, to which the most learned men in Italy resorted, it was the custom for one of the party, after dinner, to select certain passages from the works of Plato, which were submitted to the elucidation of the company, each of the guests undertaking the illustration or discussion of some important or doubtful point. By this institution, which was continued for several years, the philosophy of Plato was supported not only in credit but in splendour, and its professors were considered as the most respectable and enlightened men of the age. Whatever Lorenzo thought proper to patronise became the admiration of Florence, and consequently of all Italy. He was the *glass of fashion;* and those who joined in his pursuits, or imitated his example, could not fail of sharing in that applause which seemed to attend on every action of his life.

Effects of this institution.

Of the particular nature, or the beneficial effects of this establishment, little further is now to be collected, nor must we expect, either on this or on any other occasion, to meet with the transactions of the Florentine academy in the fifteenth century. The principal advantages of this institution seem to have been the collecting together

together men of talents and erudition, who had courage to dissent from established modes of belief, and of supplying them with new, rational, and important topicks of conversation. From these discourses it was not difficult to extract the purest lessons of moral conduct, or the sublimest sentiments of veneration for the Deity; but good sense was the only alembick through which the true essence could be obtained, and this was not at hand on all occasions. The extravagancies of some of the disciples contributed to sink into discredit the doctrines of their master. Even Ficino himself, the great champion of the sect, exhibits a proof, that when the imagination is once heated by the pursuit of a favourite object, it is difficult to restrain it within proper bounds. Habituated from his earliest youth to the study of this philosophy, and conversant only with Plato and his followers, their doctrines occupied his whole soul, and appeared in all his conduct and conversation. Even his epistles breathe nothing but Plato, and fatigue us with the endless repetition of opinions which Lorenzo has more clearly exhibited in a few luminous pages. Ficino was not, however, satisfied with following the track of Plato, but has given us some treatises of his own, in which he has occasionally taken excursions far beyond the limits which his master

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master prescribed to himself[h]. We might be inclined to smile at his folly, or to pity his weakness, did not the consideration of the follies and weaknesses of the present times, varied indeed from those of past ages, but perhaps not diminished, repress the arrogant emotion.

Number and celebrity of its members.

Of those who more particularly distinguished themselves by the protection which they afforded to the new philosophy, or by the progress they made in the study of it, Ficino has left a numerous catalogue in a letter to Martinus Uranius, in which he allots the chief place to his friends of the family of the Medici[i]. Protected and esteemed by Cosmo, the same unalterable attachment subsisted between the philosopher and his patrons for four successive generations. If ever the love of science was hereditary, it must have been in this family. Of the other eminent men whom Ficino has enumerated, Bandini has given us

[h] In his treatise *de vita cælitus comparanda*, we have a chapter, *de virtute verborum atque cantus ad beneficium cæleste captandum*, and another, *de astronomica diligentia in liberis procreandis*, with other disquisitions equally instructive. *Fic. de vita. Ven.* 1548, 8°.

[i] *Fic. Ep. lib.* xi. *Ep.* 30. *Ed.* 1497. *v. App. No.* XX.

us some interesting particulars[k], to which considerable additions might be made; but the number is too great, and the materials are too extensive, to be comprised within moderate limits. In perusing the catalogue of the disciples of this institution, we perceive that the greatest part of them were natives of Florence, a circumstance that may give some idea of the surprising attention which was then paid in that city to literary pursuits. Earnest in the acquisition of wealth, indefatigable in improving their manufactures and extending their commerce, the Florentines seem not, however, to have lost sight of the true dignity of man, or of the proper objects of his regard. A thorough acquaintance as well with the ancient authors as with the literature of his own age, was an indispensable qualification in the character of a Florentine; but few of them were satisfied with this inferiour praise. The writers of that country, of whose lives and productions some account is given by Negri, amount in number to upwards of two thousand, and among these may be found many names of the first celebrity. In this respect the city of Florence stands unrivalled. A species of praise as honourable as it is indisputable.

[k] *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. passim.*

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ASSASSINATION of the duke of Milan—Ambition of Lodovico Sforza—Conspiracy of the Pazzi—Parties engaged in it—Family of the Pazzi—Origin of the attempt—Arrangements for its execution—Giuliano assassinated, and Lorenzo wounded—The conspirators attack the palace—Repulsed by the Gonfaloniere—Punishment of the conspirators—Conduct of Lorenzo—Memorials of the conspiracy—Lorenzo prepares for his defence against the pope and the king of Naples—Latin ode of Politiano—Kindness of Lorenzo to the relatives of the conspirators—Violence of Sixtus IV.*—He excommunicates Lorenzo and the magistrates—Singular reply of the Florentine synod—Sixtus attempts to prevail on the Florentines to deliver up Lorenzo—Danger of his situation—Conduct of the war—Lorenzo negotiates for peace—Death of Donato Acciajuoli—Various success of the war—Lorenzo resolves to visit the king of Naples—His letter to the magistrates of Florence—He embarks at Pisa—Concludes a treaty with the king—Sixtus perseveres in the war—The Turks make a descent upon Italy—Peace concluded with the pope.*

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WHILST Lorenzo was dividing his time between the cares of government and the promotion of literature, an event took place that attracted the attention of all Italy towards Milan. This was the death of the duke Galeazzo Maria, who was assassinated in a solemn procession, and in his ducal robes, as he was entering the church of S. Stefano. This daring act, which seems to have originated partly in personal resentment, and partly in an aversion to the tyranny of the duke, was not attended with the consequences expected by the perpetrators; two of whom were killed on the spot; and

Assassination of the duke of Milan.

1476.

CHAP. IV. and the third, Girolamo Olgiato, a youth of twenty-three years of age, after having been refused shelter in his father's house, died upon the scaffold. On his execution he shewed the spirit of an ancient Roman[a]. The conspirators undoubtedly expected to meet with the countenance and protection of the populace, to whom they knew that the duke had rendered himself odious by every species of cruelty and oppression. The delight which he seemed to take in shedding the blood of his subjects had rendered him an object of horrour—his insatiable debauchery, of disgust[b]; he was even suspected of having destroyed

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[a] Ne fu nel morire meno animoso, che nell' operare si fusse stato; perchè trovandosi ignudo, e con il carnefice davanti, che aveva il coltello in mano per ferirlo, disse queste parole in lingua Latina, perchè litterato era, "*Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*" *Mac. Hist. lib.* vii.

It appears, however, from the ancient chronicle of Donato Bossi, that more than one of the conspirators suffered the horrid punishment which he there relates:—"Post questionem de participibus conjurationis, in vestibulo arcis, urbem versus, in quaterna membra vivi discerpti sunt." *Chronic. Bossiana. Ed. Mil.* 1492.

[b] Era Galeazzo libidinoso, e crudele; delle qual due cose gli spessi essempi l'havevano fatto odiosissimo; perchè non solo non gli bastava corrompere le donne nobili,

stroyed his mother, who, as he thought, interfered too much in the government of Milan; and who suddenly died as she was making her retreat from thence to Cremona. But no commotion whatever took place in the city, and Giovan Galeazzo, a child of eight years of age, peaceably succeeded his father in the dukedom[c]. The imbecility of his youth tempted the daring spirit of his uncle, Lodovico, to form a sytematick plan for obtaining the government of Milan, in the execution of which he drew ruin upon himself, and entailed a long succession of misery upon his unfortunate country. CHAP. IV.

Ambition of Lodovico Sforza.

The connexion that had long subsisted between the houses of Sforza and of Medici, rendered it impossible for Lorenzo to be an indifferent spectator of this event. At his instance Tomaso Soderini was despatched to Milan, to assist by his advice the young prince and his mother, who had taken upon herself the regency during the minority of her son. The ambitious designs of Lodovico soon became apparent. Having persuaded his three brothers, Sforza

nobili, che prendeva ancora piacere di publicarle; nè era contento fare morire gli huomini, se con qualche modo crudele non gli ammazzava. *Mac. lib.* vii.

[c] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 522.

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Sforza duke of Bari, Ottaviano, and Ascanio, to second his views, he began to oppose the authority of the dutchess, and attempted to devest her of the assistance of her faithful and experienced counsellor Cecco Simoneta, a native of Calabria, whose integrity and activity had recommended him to the patronage of the celebrated Francesco Sforza[d]. Simoneta, aware of his design, endeavoured to frustrate it, by imprisoning and punishing some of his accomplices of inferiour rank. The four brothers immediately resorted to arms, and of this circumstance Simoneta availed himself to obtain a decree, that either banished them from Milan or prohibited their return. Ottaviano, one of the brothers, soon afterwards perished in attempting to cross the river Adda. These rigorous measures, instead of depressing the genius of Lodovico, gave a keener edge to his talents, and superadded to his other motives the desire of revenge. Nor was it long before his resentment was gratified

[d] Cecco was brother to the historian Simoneta, whose elegant Latin history of the life of Francesco Sforza has furnished future historians with some of the most interesting particulars of that period. This work was first published at Milan in 1479, and reprinted there in 1486. The Italian translation by Cristoforo Landino, was also published at Milan in 1490, under the title of *La Sforziada*.

tified by the destruction of Simoneta, who expiated by his death the offence which he had committed against the growing power of the brothers[e]. No sooner was the dutchess deprived of his support, than Lodovico wrested from her feeble hands the sceptre of Milan, and took the young duke under his immediate protection; where, like a weak plant in the shade of a vigorous tree, he languished for a few miserable years, and then fell a victim to that increasing strength in which he ought to have found his perservation. CHAP. IV.

The publick agitation excited by the assassination of the duke of Milan had scarcely subsided, before an event took place at Florence of a much more atrocious nature, inasmuch as the objects destined to destruction had not afforded a pretext, in any degree plausible, for such an attempt. Accordingly we have now to enter on a transaction that has seldom been mentioned without emotions of the strongest horrour and detestation, and which, as has justly been observed, is an incontrovertible proof of the practical atheism of the times in which it took place. Conspiracy of the Pazzi. 1478.

[e] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *fl.* 532.

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place[f].—A transaction in which a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and several other ecclesiasticks, associated themselves with a band of ruffians, to destroy two men who were an honour to their age and country; and purposed to perpetrate their crime at a season of hospitality, in the sanctuary of a Christian church, and at the very moment of the elevation of the host, when the audience bowed down before it, and the assassins were presumed to be in the immediate presence of their God.

Parties engaged in it.

At the head of this conspiracy were Sixtus IV. and his nephew Girolamo Riario. Raffaello Riario, the nephew of this Girolamo, who, although a young man then pursuing his studies, had lately been raised to the dignity of cardinal, was rather an instrument than an accomplice in the scheme. The enmity of Sixtus to Lorenzo had for some time been apparent, and if not occasioned by the assistance which Lorenzo had afforded to Niccolo Vitelli, and other independent nobles, whose dominions Sixtus had either threatened or attacked, was certainly increased by it. The destruction of the Medici appeared therefore

[f] *Voltaire Essai sur les mœurs, &c. des nations*, v. ii. *p.* 283. *Ed. Genev.* 1769, 4°.

therefore to Sixtus as the removal of an obstacle that thwarted all his views, and by the accomplishment of which the small surrounding states would soon become an easy prey. There is, however, great reason to believe that the pope did not confine his ambition to these subordinate governments, but that, if the conspiracy had succeeded to his wish, he meant to have grasped at the dominion of Florence itself[g]. The alliance lately formed between the Florentines, the Venetians, and the duke of Milan, which was principally effected by Lorenzo de' Medici, and by which the pope found himself prevented from disturbing the peace of Italy, was an additional and powerful motive of resentment[h]. One of the first proofs of the displeasure of the pope was his depriving Lorenzo of the office of treasurer of the papal see, which he gave to the Pazzi,

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[g] At least Ferdinand of Naples, the ally of Sixtus in the contest that ensued, assured the Florentine ambassadour that such was the intention of the pope, "che "sapeva lui, che Sisto non tenne meno fantasia in capo "d' occupare e farsi signore di Firenze, che il presente "sommo pontefice si habbi tenuta di occupare questo "regno."—Alluding to the subsequent attack made by Innocent VIII. upon the kingdom of Naples.

Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v. ii. *p.* 107.

[h] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 526.

CHAP. IV. Pazzi, a Florentine family, who, as well as the Medici, had a publick bank at Rome, and who afterwards became the coadjutors of Sixtus in the execution of his treacherous purpose.

Family of the Pazzi.

This family was one of the noblest and most respectable in Florence; numerous in its members, and possessed of great wealth and influence. Of three brothers, two of whom had filled the office of gonfaloniere, only one was then living. If we may credit the account of Politiano[i], Giacopo

[i] CONJURATIONIS PACTIANÆ COMMENTARIUM. This piece, written by a spectator, and printed in the same year in which the event took place, is as remarkable for the vehemence of its invective, as for the elegance of its style, and proves how deeply Politiano felt, and how keenly he resented the injury done to his great patrons. Not being republished with the other works of this author in 1498 or 1499, or in the Paris edition of 1519, it became extremely rare, "tam rarum deventum quidem, ut inter "doctos sæpe dubitatum est, an unquam typis impres- "sum fuerit, ac inter alios ignoratus etiam libri titulus." *Adimarius in præf. ad Pact. Conj. Comment. Ed. Nap.* 1769. Adimari having procured the ancient copy from the Strozzi library, and collated it with various manuscripts, republished it at Naples in 1769, with great elegance and copious illustrations, forming an ample quarto volume; from which accurate edition this piece is given in the Appendix, No. XXI.

copo de' Pazzi, the surviving brother, who was regarded as the chief of the family, and far advanced in years, was an unprincipled libertine, who having by gaming and intemperance dissipated his paternal property, sought an opportunity of averting, or of concealing his own ruin in that of the republick. Giacopo had no children; but his elder brother Piero had left seven sons, and his younger brother Antonio three; one of whom, Guglielmo de' Pazzi, had in the lifetime of Cosmo de' Medici married Bianca, the sister of Lorenzo. Francesco, the brother of Guglielmo, had for several years resided principally at Rome. Of a bold and aspiring temper, he could not brook the superiority of the Medici, which was supposed to have induced him to choose that place as his residence in preference to Florence. CHAP. IV.

Several of the Florentine authors have endeavoured to trace the reason of the enmity of this family to that of the Medici; but nothing seems discoverable, which could plausibly operate as a motive, much less as a justification of their resentment. On the contrary, the affinity between the two families, and the favours conferred by the Medici on the Pazzi, memorials of which yet remain in the hand-writing of Giacopo,

CHAP. IV. Giacopo[k], might be presumed to have prevented animosity, if not to have conciliated esteem; and that they lived on terms of apparent friendship and intimacy is evident from many circumstances of the conspiracy. Machiavelli relates a particular injury received by one of the Pazzi, which, as he informs us, that family attributed to the Medici. Giovanni de' Pazzi had married the daughter of Giovanni Borromeo, whose immense property upon his death should have descended to his daughter. But pretensions to it being made by Carlo, his nephew, a litigation ensued, in the event of which the daughter was deprived of her inheritance[l]. There is, however, reason to believe that this decree, whether justifiable or not, and of which we have no documents to enable us to form a judgment, was made many years before the death of Piero de' Medici, when his sons were too young to have taken a very active part in it; and it is certain that it produced no ostensible enmity between the families. It is also deserving of notice, that this transaction happened at a time when Lorenzo

[k] In letters from him to Lorenzo, two of which are given by Fabroni, and will be found in the Appendix, No. XXII.

[l] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

renzo was absent from Florence, on one of his youthful excursions through Italy[m]. CHAP. IV.

This conspiracy, of which Sixtus and his nephew were the real instigators, was first agitated at Rome, where the intercourse between the count Girolamo Riario and Francesco de' Pazzi, in consequence of the office held by the latter, afforded them an opportunity of communicating to each other their common jealousy of the power of the Medici, and their desire of depriving them of their influence in Florence; in which event it is highly probable, that the Pazzi were to have exercised the chief authority in the city, under the patronage, if not under the avowed dominion of the papal see. The principal agent engaged in the undertaking was Francesco Salviati, archbishop of Pisa, to which rank he had lately been promoted by Sixtus, in opposition to the wishes of the Medici, who had for some time endeavoured to prevent him from exercising his episcopal functions. If it be allowed Origin of the attempt.

[m] This fact is authenticated by the letter from Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de' Medici, dated the twenty-second of April 1465, and now first published in the Appendix from the MS. in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. *App. No.* IX.

CHAP. IV. allowed that the unfavourable character given of him by Politiano is exaggerated, it is generally agreed that his qualities were the reverse of those which ought to have been the recommendations to such high preferment. The other conspirators were, Giacopo Salviati, brother of the archbishop; Giacopo Poggio, one of the sons of the celebrated Poggio Bracciolini, and who, like all the other sons of that eminent scholar, had obtained no small share of literary reputation[n]; Bernardo

[n] Giacopo not only translated the Florentine history of his father from Latin into Italian, but has also left a specimen of his talents in a commentary on the *Trionfo della Fama* of Petrarca, which was published in folio, without a date, but, as Bandini conjectures about the year 1485 or 1487. It may however be presumed, from the dedication of this book to Lorenzo de' Medici, that it was printed previous to the year 1478, when the author joined in this conspiracy to destroy a man, of whom and of whose family, he had shortly before expressed himself in the following affectionate and grateful terms: "E "perchè, charissimo Lorenzo, io conosco quel poco di "cognitione è in me, tutto essere per conforto e acer- "rimo stimolo ne miei teneri anni, da Cosimo tuo avolo, "pari per certo a Camillo, o Fabritio, o Scipione, o "qualunche altro, i quali appresso di noi sono in vene- "ratione, se fussi nato nella Romana republica, mi pare "essere obligato e costretto ogni frutto producessi per "alcun tempo le sue gravissime monitioni e exortationi, "come persona grata, a te, vero e degno suo herede "destinarlo;

Bernardo Bandini, a daring libertine, rendered desperate by the consequences of his excesses; Giovan Battista Montesicco, who had distinguished himself by his military talents as one of the *Condottieri* of the armies of the pope; Antonio Maffei, a priest of Volterra; and Stefano da Bagnone, one of the apostolick scribes, with several others of inferiour note. CHAP. IV.

In the arrangement of their plan, which appears to have been concerted with great precaution and secrecy, the conspirators soon discovered, that the dangers which they had to encounter were not so likely to arise from the difficulty of the attempt, as from the subsequent resentment of the Florentines, a great majority of whom were strongly attached to the Medici. Hence it became necessary to provide a military force, the assistance of which might be equally requisite whether the enterprise proved abortive or successful. By the influence of the pope, the king of Naples, who was then in alliance with him, and on one of whose sons he had recently Arrangements for its execution.

" destinarlo; aciochè intenda quel tanto di lume d' alcuna " virtù è in me, reconoscerlo dalla casa tua, alla quale " tanto sono obligato quanto giudicherai sieno da stimare " queste mie lettere." *Giac. Poggio in Procm.*

CHAP. IV. recently bestowed a cardinal's hat, was also induced to countenance the attempt.

These preliminaries being adjusted, Girolamo wrote to his nephew, the cardinal Riario, then at Pisa, ordering him to obey whatever directions he might receive from the archbishop. A body of two thousand men were destined to approach by different routes towards Florence, so as to be in readiness at the time appointed for striking the blow.

Shortly afterwards, the archbishop requested the presence of the cardinal at Florence, whither he immediately repaired, and took up his residence at a seat of the Pazzi, about a mile from the city. It seems to have been the intention of the conspirators to have effected their purpose at Fiesole, where Lorenzo then had his country residence, to which they supposed that he would invite the cardinal and his attendants. Nor were they deceived in this conjecture, for Lorenzo prepared a magnificent entertainment on this occasion: but the absence of Giuliano, on account of indisposition, obliged the conspirators to postpone the attempt[o]. Being thus disappointed

[o] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 23.

pointed in their hopes, another plan was now to be adopted; and on further deliberation it was resolved, that the assassination should take place on the succeeding Sunday, in the church of the Reparata, since called *Santa Maria del Fiore*, and that the signal for execution should be the elevation of the host. At the same moment the archbishop and others of the conspirators were to seize upon the palace, or residence of the magistrates, whilst the office of Giacopo de' Pazzi was to endeavour, by the cry of liberty, to incite the citizens to revolt.

The immediate assassination of Giuliano was committed to Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini, and that of Lorenzo had been intrusted to the sole hand of Montesicco. This office he had willingly undertaken whilst he understood that it was to be executed in a private dwelling; but he shrunk from the idea of polluting the house of God with so heinous a crime[p]. Two ecclesiasticks were therefore selected for the commission

[p] Disse che non gli bastarebbe mai l' animo, commettere tanto eccesso *in chiesa*, ed accompagnare il tradimento col sacrilegio; il che fu il principio della rovina dell' impresa loro. *Mac. lib.* 8.

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mission of a deed, from which the soldier was deterred by conscientious motives. These were Stefano da Bagnone, the apostolick scribe, and Antonio Maffei.

Giuliano assassinated, and Lorenzo wounded.

The young cardinal having expressed a desire to attend divine service in the church of the Reparata, on the ensuing Sunday, being the twenty-sixth day of April 1478, Lorenzo invited him and his suit to his house in Florence. He accordingly came with a large retinue, supporting the united characters of cardinal and apostolick legate, and was received by Lorenzo with that splendour and hospitality with which he was always accustomed to entertain men of high rank and consequence. Giuliano did not appear, a circumstance that alarmed the conspirators, whose arrangements would not admit of longer delay. They soon however learned that he intended to be present at the church.—The service was already begun, and the cardinal had taken his seat, when Francesco de' Pazzi and Bandini, observing that Giuliano was not yet arrived, left the church and went to his house, in order to ensure and hasten his attendance. Giuliano accompanied them; and as he walked between them, they threw their arms round him with the familiarity of intimate friends,

friends, but in fact to discover whether he had any armour under his dress[q]; possibly conjecturing, from his long delay, that he had suspected their purpose. At the same time, by their freedom and jocularity, they endeavoured to obviate any apprehensions which he might entertain from such a proceeding[r]. The conspirators having taken their stations near their intended victims, waited with impatience for the appointed signal[s]. The bell rang—the priest raised

[q] Condottolo nel tempio, e per la via e nella chiesa con motteggi, e giovenili ragionamenti l' intratenero. Ne mancò Francesco sotto colore di carezzarlo, con le mani e con le braccia strignerlo, per vedere se lo trovava o di corazza, o d' altra simile difesa munito. *Mac. lib.* 8.

[r] Giuliano was indisposed, and totally unarmed, having left at home even his dagger, which he was generally accustomed to wear. "Infirmus quidem, & qui ea die, "præter morem, gladiolum, qui ei ulceratum crus "quatiebat, domi reliquerat."

Synod. Flor. Act. ap. Fabr. v. ii. *p.* 134.

[s] In the point of time fixed for the perpetration of this deed, historians are nearly agreed. "Cum Eucha-"ristia attolleretur," says *Raffaello da Volt. Geogr.* 151. "Cum sacerdos manibus Eucharistiam frangeret." *Val. in vitâ, p.* 24. "Peracta sacerdotis communione," says *Politiano.* "Post Eucharistiæ consecrationem." *In Prov. Rep. Flor. ap. Fabr. v.* ii. *p.* 111. "Quandosi commu-"nicava il sacerdote." *Mac. lib.* 8.

CHAP. IV. raised the consecrated wafer—the people bowed before it—and at the same instant Bandini plunged a short dagger into the breast of Giuliano.—On receiving the wound he took a few hasty steps and fell, when Francesco de' Pazzi rushed upon him with incredible fury, and stabbed him in different parts of his body, continuing to repeat his strokes even after he was apparently dead. Such was the violence of his rage that he wounded himself deeply in the thigh. The priests who had undertaken the murder of Lorenzo were not equally successful. An ill-directed blow from Maffei, which was aimed at the throat, but took place behind the neck, rather roused him to his defence than disabled him[t]. He immediately threw off his cloak, and holding it up as a shield in his left hand, with his right he drew his sword, and repelled his assailants. Perceiving that their purpose was defeated, the two ecclesiasticks, after having wounded one of Lorenzo's attendants who had interposed to defend him, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. At the same moment, Bandini, his dagger streaming with the blood of Giuliano, rushed towards Lorenzo; but

[t] "Il primo colpo fu nella collotola, perchè non potè "tenerlo pel braccio per dargli nel petto, e cosi confessò."
Strinatus, ap. Adimar. in not. p. 25.

but meeting in his way with Francesco Nori, a person in the service of the Medici, and in whom they placed great confidence, he stabbed him with a wound instantaneously mortal[u]. At the approach of Bandini the friends of Lorenzo encircled him, and hurried him into the sacristy, where Politiano and others closed the doors, which were of brass. Apprehensions being entertained that the weapon which had wounded him was poisoned, a young man attached to Lorenzo sucked the wound[v]. A general alarm and consternation commenced in the church; and such was the tumult which ensued, that it was at first believed by the audience that the building

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[u] When Leo X. many years afterwards paid a visit to Florence, he granted an indulgence to all those who should pray for the soul of Francesco Nori, under the idea that his death had preserved the life of his father Lorenzo. *Adimar. in not. p.* 20.

[v] "Aggressus in eos factus fuit a Francisco de Pazzis, "et aliis pluribus suis sotiis armatis *armis veneno infectis*" says Matteo de Toscano, cited by Adimari, *Documenta Conj. Pact. p.* 142. I do not find that any other author mentions this circumstance. The young man who gave this striking proof of his affection to Lorenzo was Antonio Ridolfo, of a noble family of Florence.

Pol. Conj. Pact. Comment. in Appt.

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building was falling in[w]; but no sooner was it understood that Lorenzo was in danger, than several of the youth of Florence formed themselves into a body, and receiving him into the midst of them, conducted him into his house, making a circuitous turn from the church, lest he should meet with the dead body of his brother.

The conspirators attack the palace.

Whilst these transactions passed in the church, another commotion arose in the palace; where the archbishop, who had left the church, as agreed upon before the attack on the Medici, and about thirty of his associates, attempted to overpower the magistrates, and to possess themselves of the seat of government[x]. Leaving some of his followers stationed in different apartments,

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[w] "Qui in templo fuerant, clamoribus territi, huc "atque illuc cursitantes veluti attoniti, quidnam rei "fuisset quæritabant. Fuere qui crederent templum "ruere." *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 25.

[x] "Con la sua compagnia, ch' erano circa persone "ventotto," says Belfredello Strinato, *ap. Adimar. in not. p.* 17. Ammirato informs us, that the archbishop had about thirty followers, and that he left the church on the pretence of paying a visit to his mother.

Amm. Ist. v. iii. *p.* 117.

ments, the archbishop proceeded to an interiour chamber, where Cesare Petrucci, then gonfaloniere, and the other magistrates, were assembled. No sooner was the gonfaloniere informed of his approach, than out of respect to his rank he rose to meet him. Whether the archbishop was disconcerted by the presence of Petrucci, who was known to be of a resolute character, of which he had given a striking instance in frustrating the attack of Bernardo Nardi upon the town of Prato, or whether his courage was not equal to the undertaking, is uncertain; but instead of intimidating the magistrates by a sudden attack, he began to inform Petrucci that the pope had bestowed an employment on his son, of which he had to deliver to him the credentials[y]. This he did with such hesitation, and in so desultory a manner, that it was scarcely possible to collect his meaning. Petrucci also observed that he frequently changed colour, and at times turned towards the door, as if giving a signal to some one to approach.—Alarmed at his manner, and probably aware of his character, Petrucci suddenly rushed out of the chamber, and called together the guards and

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[y] Sub nomine et colore præsentandi cujusdam brevis papalis. *M. Tuscanus ap. Adimar. int. doc. p.* 142.

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and attendants. By attempting to retreat, the archbishop confessed his guilt[z]. In pursuing him, Petrucci met with Giacopo Poggio, whom he caught by the hair, and, throwing him on the ground, delivered into the custody of his followers. The rest of the magistrates and their attendants seized upon such arms as the place supplied, and the implements of the kitchen became formidable weapons in their hands. Having secured the doors of the palace, they furiously attacked their scattered and intimidated enemies, who no longer attempted resistance. During this commotion they were alarmed by a tumult from without, and perceived from the windows Giacopo de' Pazzi, followed by about one hundred soldiers, crying out liberty, and exhorting the people to revolt. At the same time they found that the insurgents

Repulsed by the gonfaloniere and magistrates.

[z] He was deprived of his expected support by a singular incident. Some of his followers had retired into an adjoining chamber to wait his signal. It was customary for every succeeding magistrate to make an alteration in the doors of that place, as a precaution against treachery; and Petrucci had so constructed them that they closed and bolted on the slightest impulse. The followers of the archbishop thus found themselves unexpectedly secured in the chamber, without the possibility of affording assistance to their leader.

Fabr. v. i. *p.* 67. *v.* ii. *p.* 108.

insurgents had forced the gates of the palace, and that some of them were entering to defend their companions. The magistrates however persevered in their defence, and repulsing their enemies, secured the gates till a reenforcement of their friends came to their assistance. Petrucci was now first informed of the assassination of Giuliano, and the attack made upon Lorenzo. The relation of this treachery excited his highest indignation. With the concurrence of the state counsellors, he ordered Giacopo Poggio to be hung in sight of the populace, out of the palace windows; and secured the archbishop, with his brother and the other chiefs of the conspiracy. Their followers were either slaughtered in the palace, or thrown half alive through the windows. One only of the whole number escaped. He was found some days afterwards concealed in the wainscots, perishing with hunger, and in consideration of his sufferings received his pardon[a]. CHAP. IV.

Punishment of the conspirators.

The young cardinal Riario, who had taken refuge at the altar, was preserved from the rage of the populace by the interference of Lorenzo, who appeared to give credit to his assever-

[a] *Amm. v.* iii. *fi.* 118.

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asseverations, that he was ignorant of the intentions of the conspirators[b]. It is said that his fears had so violent an effect upon him that he never afterwards recovered his natural complexion[c]. His attendants fell a sacrifice to the resentment of the citizens. The streets were polluted with the dead bodies and mangled limbs of the slaughtered. With the head of one of these unfortunate wretches on a lance, the populace paraded the city, which resounded with the cry of *Palle, Palle*[d]*! Perish the traitors*[e]*!* Francesco de' Pazzi being found at the house of his uncle Giacopo, where on account of his wound

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[b] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 26.

[c] "Tali tantoque metu arreptum, ut exinde nunquam "naturalem colorem acquisierit.
Ciaeconius ap. Adimar. in not. p. 26.

[d] The palle d' oro, or golden balls, the arms of the family of Medici.

[e] Un prete del vescovo fu morto in piazza, e squartato, e levatogli la testa, e per tutto il dì fu portata la detta testa in sur una lancia per tutto Firenze; e strascinato le gambe, e un quarto dinanzi con un braccio portato in su uno spiede per tutta la cita, gridando sempre MUOIANO I TRADITORI. *Landuccius ap. Adimar. in not. p.* 26. Tutti gridando VIVA LE PALLE, E MUOIANO I TRADITORI.
Chron. Caroli e Florentiola ap. idem.

wound he was confined to his bed, was dragged out naked and exhausted by loss of blood, and being brought to the palace, suffered the same death as his associate. His punishment was immediately followed by that of the archbishop, who was hung through the windows of the palace, and was not allowed even to devest himself of his prelatical robes. The last moments of Salviati, if we may credit Politiano, were marked by a singular instance of ferocity. Being suspended close to Francesco de' Pazzi, he seized the naked body with his teeth, and relaxed not from his hold even in the agonies of death[f]. Jacopo de' Pazzi had escaped from the city during the tumult; but the day following he was made a prisoner by the neighbouring peasants, who, regardless of his entreaties to put him to death, brought him to Florence, and delivered

[f] In the opinion of Politiano, the crime of the archbishop was not expiated by his death. Amongst his poems, printed in the edition of Basil, are several epigrams that strongly speak his unquenchable resentment. The following is a specimen:

Salviatus mitræ sceleratus honore superbit:
Et quemquam cœlo credimus esse deum?
Scilicet hæc scelera, hoc artes meruere nefandæ?
At laqueo, en! pendet. Estis io superi!

CHAP. IV. delivered him up to the magistrates[z]. As his guilt was manifest, his execution was instantaneous, and afforded from the windows of the palace another spectacle that gratified the resentment of the enraged multitude. His nephew Renato, who suffered at the same time, excited in some degree the commiseration of the spectators. Devoted to his studies, and averse to popular commotions, he had refused to be an actor in the conspiracy, and his silence was his only crime. The body of Giacopo had been interred in the church of Santa Croce, and to this circumstance the superstition of the people attributed an unusual and incessant fall of rain that succeeded these disturbances. Partaking in their prejudices, or desirous of gratifying their revenge, the magistrates ordered his body to be removed without the walls of the city. The following morning it was again torn from the grave by a great multitude of children, who, in spite of the restrictions of decency, and the interference of some of the inhabitants, after dragging

[z] *Am. Ist. Fior. v.* iii. *p.* 119. "L'altro dì ne venne "preso Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi che era fuggito; e' fu "preso in Romagna, che fu a dì 27, e fu isaminato, e di "subito impiccato a detta finestra del palagio."

Strinat. ap. Adimar. in not. p. 27.

dragging it a long time through the streets, and treating it with every degree of wanton opprobrium, threw it into the river Arno[h]. Such was the fate of a man who had enjoyed the highest honours of the republick, and for his services to the state had been rewarded with the privileges of the equestrian rank[i]. The rest of this devoted family were condemned either to imprisonment CHAP. IV.

[h] Quando furono all' uscio della sua casa, messono il capestro nella campanella dell' uscio, e lo tirarono sù, dicendo, *picchia l' uscio*. *Landuccius ap. Adimar. in not. p.* 43. Politiano, who seems to dwell with pleasure on the excesses of an enraged populace, relates more particularly their insults to the lifeless body of Jacopo.

[i] Machiavelli, who bore no partiality towards the Medici, gives us a more favourable idea of the character of Jacopo. "Narronsi de i suoi alcuni vitii, tra i quali "erano giuochi e bestemmie, più che a qualunque per- "duto huomo non si converebbe; i quali vitii con le "molte elemosine ricompensava; perchè a molti biso- "gnosi, e luoghi pii largamente sovveniva. Puossi "ancora di quello dire questo bene, che il sabbato da- "vanti a quella Domenica diputata a tanto homicidio, "per non fare partecipe dell' aversa sua fortuna alcun' "altro, tutti i suoi debiti pagò, tutte le mercantie che' "egli haveva in dogana ed in casa, le quali ad altrui ap- "partenessero, con maravigliosa sollecitudine a i padroni "di quelle consegnò." *Mac. lib.* 8.

CHAP. IV. sonment or to exile[k], excepting only Guglielmo de' Pazzi, who, though not unsuspected, was first sheltered from the popular fury in the house of Lorenzo, and was afterwards ordered to remain at his own villa, about twenty-five miles distant from Florence.

Although most diligent search was made for the priests who had undertaken the murder of Lorenzo, it was not till the third day after the attempt that they were discovered, having obtained a shelter in the monastery of the Benedictine monks. No sooner were they brought from the place of their concealment, than the populace after cruelly mutilating them, put them to death; and with difficulty were prevented from slaughtering the monks themselves[l]. Montesicco, who had adhered to the cause of the conspirators, although he had refused to be the active instrument of their project, was taken a few days afterwards, as he was

[k] Furono presi Andrea di Piero de' Pazzi, Giovanni, e Nicolo, e Galeotto e Antonio de' Pazzi fratelli, trovati nell' orto de' Monaci degli Angeli. Nicolo, Giovanni, e Galeotto furono menati nella Torre di Volterra.

Cod. Abbatiæ Flor. ap. Adimar. in not. p. 36.

[l] *Pol. Conj. Pact. Comment. in Appi.*

was endeavouring to save himself by flight, and beheaded, having first made a full confession of all the circumstances attending the conspiracy, by which it appeared that the pope was privy to the whole transaction[m]. The punishment of Bernardo Bandini was longer delayed. He had safely passed the bounds of Italy, and had taken refuge at length in Constantinople; but the sultan Mahomet, being apprized of his crime, ordered him to be seized, and sent in chains to Florence; at the same time alleging, as the motive of his conduct, the respect which he had for the character of Lorenzo de' Medici. He arrived in the month of December in the ensuing year, and met with the due reward of his treachery. An embassy was sent from Florence

[m] Montesiccus in ipsa fuga comprehensus, postquam omnia uti gesta erant, et non solum consilia, sed etiam dicta pontificis, et comitis Hieronymi de tota conjuratione aperuisset, reste suspenditur. *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 69. But Adimari had before produced documents from the libraries of Florence, which shew that Montesicco was decapitated. "A dì 1. maggio venne preso "M. Gio. Bat. da Montesecco, e a dì 4. di detto mese, "gli fu tagliato la testa al palazzo del podestà." *Bibl. Abbat. Flor. Cod. No.* 67. *ap. Adimar.* "Fu tagliato il "capo sulla porta del podestà, a Gio Battista da Monte-"secco." *In not. ad lib. cui titulus*, Il Priorista, *ap. idem.*

CHAP. IV. rence to return thanks to the sultan in the name of the republick[n].

Conduct of Lorenzo.

Throughout the whole of this just but dreadful retribution, Lorenzo had exerted all his influence to restrain the indignation of the populace, and to prevent the further effusion of blood. Soon after the attempt upon his life, an immense multitude surrounded his house, and not being convinced of his safety, demanded to see him[o]. He seized the opportunity which their

[n] "Bernardo di Bandino Bandini ne venne preso da "Constantinopoli, a dì 14 Dicembre 1479, e disami- "nato che fu al Bargello, fu impiccato alle finestre di "detto Bargello, allato alla Doana, a dì 29 Dicembre "1479, che pochi dì stette." *Strinatus ap. Adimar. in notis ad Conj. Pact. Comment. p.* 29. Adimari, on the authority of the Chronicle of Carlo a Florentiola, attributes the seizure of Bandini to the orders of the sultan Bajazet; but the capture of Bandini took place in the reign of his predecessor Mahomet II. whose death did not happen till the year 1481.

Murat. Ann. v. ix. *p.* 537. *Sagrado, Mem. Istor. de' Monarchi Ottomani, p.* 95. *Ed. Ven.* 1688.

[o] "Jam ante Laurentianas aedes, populus ingens de "illius salute sollicitus convenerat, quibus ut animum "confirmaret, quum se e fenestris vulneratum quidem, "sed alioqui incolumem ostendisset, tanto plausu, tantis- "que acclamationibus exceptus est, ut exprimi non pos- "sit." *Valor. in vitâ, p.* 25.

their affection afforded, and, notwithstanding his wound, endeavoured by a pathetick and forcible address to moderate the violence of their resentment. He entreated that they would resign to the magistrates the task of ascertaining and of punishing the guilty, lest the innocent should be incautiously involved in destruction[p]. His appearance and his admonitions had a powerful and instantaneous effect. With one voice the people devoted themselves to the support of his cause, and besought him to take all possible precautions for his safety, as upon that depended the hopes and welfare of the republick. However Lorenzo might be gratified with these proofs of the affection of his fellow-citizens, he could not but lament that inconsiderate zeal which was so likely to impel them to a culpable excess. Turning to some of the Florentine nobility by whom he was attended, he declared that he felt more anxiety from the intemperate acclamations of his friends, than he had experienced even from his own disasters[q].

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The general sorrow for the loss of Giuliano was strongly marked. On the fourth day after his

[p] *Amm. Ist. v.* iii. *p.* 118.

[q] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 27.

CHAP. IV. his death his obsequies were performed, with great magnificence, in the church of S. Lorenzo. It appeared that he had received from the daggers of Bandini and Francesco de' Pazzi no less than nineteen wounds[r]. Many of the Florentine youth changed their dress in testimony of respect to his memory. In the predilection of the Florentines for Giuliano, historians are agreed. Even Machiavelli allows, that he possessed all the humanity and liberality that could be wished for in one born to such an elevated station, and that his funeral was honoured by the tears of his fellow-citizens[s]. Tall of stature—strong in his person—his breast prominent—his limbs full and muscular—dark eyes—a lively look—an olive complexion—loose black hair turned back from his forehead:—such is the portrait given of Giuliano by his intimate associate Politiano, who to these particulars has further added, that he excelled in active exercises, in horsemanship, in wrestling, in throwing the spear: that he was habituated to thirst and to hunger, and frequently passed a day in voluntary abstinence: possessed of great courage, of unshaken fortitude, a friend to religion and order, an admirer of

[r] *Pol. Conj. Pact. Com. in Aſp.*

[s] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

of painting, musick, and other elegant arts[t]. From the same author we also learn, that Giuliano had given proofs of his political talents in several pieces remarkable for their strength of diction and plenitude of thought; but of these no specimens now remain. Shortly after this transaction, Lorenzo received a visit from Antonio da San Gallo, who informed him that the untimely death of Giuliano had prevented his disclosing to Lorenzo a circumstance, with which it was now become necessary that he should be acquainted[u]. This was the birth of a son, whom a lady of the family of Gorini had born to Giuliano about twelve months before his death, and whom Antonio had held over the baptismal font, where he received the name of Giulio. Lorenzo immediately repaired to the place

[t] *Pol. Conj. Pact. Com. in App.*

[u] "Antonio da S. Gallo andò allora a trovar Lorenzo, dicendo, che essendo morto Giuliano, ei non aveva potuto far noto, come aveva avuto da una donna de' Gorini, sua amica, un figlio, già un anno, quale aveva tenuto egli a battesimo, e stava al rincontro della sua casa antica, nella via di Pinti. Il detto Lorenzo l' andò a vedere, e dettolo alla cura del medesimo Antonio, dove stette fino al settimo anno."

Cod. Abbat. Flor. ap. Adimar. in notis ad Conj. Pact. Com. p. 40.

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place of the infant's residence, and taking him under his protection, delivered him to Antonio, with whom he remained until he arrived at the seventh year of his age. This concealed offspring of illicit love, to whom the kindness of Lorenzo supplied the untimely loss of a father, was destined to act an important part in the affairs of Europe. The final extinction of the liberties of Florence; the alliance of the family of Medici with the royal house of France; the expulsion of Henry VIII. of England from the bosom of the Roman church; and the consequent establishment of the doctrines of the reformers in this island, are principally to be referred to this illegitimate son of Giuliano de' Medici, who, through various vicissitudes of fortune, at length obtained the supreme direction of the Roman see, and under the name of Clement VII. guided the bark of St. Peter through a succession of the severest storms which it has ever experienced[v].

The

[v] Machiavelli, who wrote his history in the pontificate of Clement VII. informs us, that this pontiff was born a few months after the death of his father, in which he has been generally followed by succeeding writers. "Rimase di lui (Giuliano) un figliuolo, il quale dopo a pochi mesi che fu morto, nacque, e fu chiamato "Giulio;

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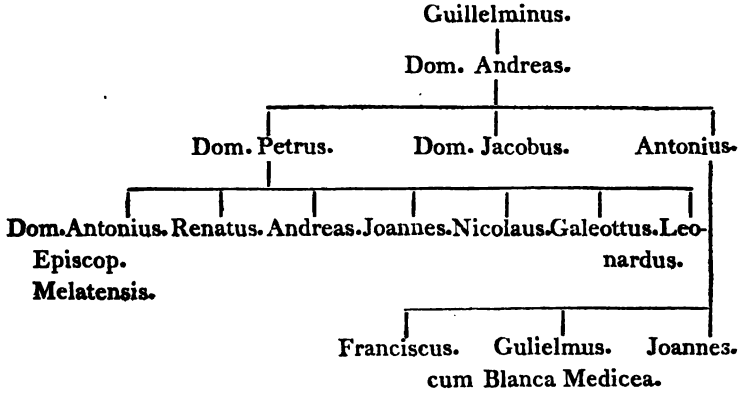
Memorials of the conspiracy.

The publick grief occasioned by the death of Giuliano was however mingled with, and alleviated by exultation for the safety of Lorenzo. Every possible method was devised to brand with infamy the perpetrators of the deed. By a publick decree, the name and arms of the Pazzi were ordered to be for ever suppressed. The appellations of such places in the city as were derived from that family were directed to be changed. All persons contracting marriage with the descendants of Andrea de' Pazzi were declared to be *ammoniti*, and prohibited from all offices and dignities in the republick.

" Giulio; il quale fu da quella virtù & fortuna ripieno, " che in questi presenti tempi tutto il mondo conosce." *Mac. lib.* 8. A full account of the political transactions of Clement VII. will be found in the Florentine history of Benedetto Varchi, written under the auspices of Cosmo I. grand duke of Florence, who granted the author access to all the archives of his family. The favour of an absolute sovereign did not seduce Varchi from the duty of an historian; but the extreme freedom with which he commented upon the events which led to the subjugation of his country, and animadverted on the characters of Clement VII. and others who contributed towards it, prevented for nearly two centuries the publication of his work, which first appeared at Cologne in 1721 in folio, and afterwards without date at Leyden, *ap. Pietro vander Aa.*

CHAP. IV. lick[w]. The ancient ceremony of conducting annually the sacred fire from the church of S. Giovanni to the house of the Pazzi was abolished, and a new method was adopted of continuing this popular superstition[x]. Andrea dal Castagno was employed, at the publick expense, to represent the persons of the traitors on the walls of the palace, in the execution of which he obtained great applause, although the figures, as a mark of infamy, were suspended by the feet[y]. On

[w] The descendants of Andrea de' Pazzi are thus accurately given by Adimari:



[x] The decree on this occasion appears amongst the documents published by Fabroni, and is given in the Appendix, No. XXIII.

[y] "L'anno 1478, quando dalla famiglia de' Pazzi & "altri loro adherenti & congiurati; fu morto in S. Maria "del

On the other hand the skill of the Florentine artists was exerted in soothing the feelings, and gratifying the curiosity of the publick, by perpetuating the remembrance of the dangers which Lorenzo had escaped. By the assistance of Andrea Verocchio Orsini, a celebrated modeller in wax, formed three figures as large as the life, which bore the most perfect resemblance of the person and features of Lorenzo, and which were placed in different churches of the territory of Florence. One of these represented him in the dress which he wore when he received the wound, and as he appeared to the populace

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" del Fiore Giuliano de' Medici, e Lorenzo suo fratello " ferito, fu deliberato dalla Signoria, che tutti quelli della " congiura fussino, come traditori, dipinti nella fac- " ciata del palagio del podestà; onde essendo questa " opera offerta ad Andrea, egli, come servitore, ed obli- " gato alla casa de' Medici l'accettò molto ben volontieri " e messovisi, la fece tanto bella, che fu uno stupore; " ne si potrebbe dire quanta arte e giudizio si conosceva " in quei personaggi ritratti per lo più di naturale, ed " impiccati per i piedi in strane attitudini, e tutte varie " e bellissime. La qual opera, perchè piacque a tutta la " città, & particolarmente agli intendenti delle cose di " pittura, fu cagione che da quella in poi, non più " Andrea dal Castagno, ma Andrea degli Impiccati " fusse chiamato."

Vasari, nella vita di Andrea dal Castagno.

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populace at the window of his palace[z]. A more lasting memorial was devised by Antonio Pollajuoli, who struck a medal on this occasion, exhibiting in the ancient choir of the Reparata, the assassination of Giuliano, and the attack made upon Lorenzo. In this medal the conspirators are all represented naked, not merely for the purpose of displaying the knowledge of the artist in the human figure, in which he excelled all his contemporaries, but, as some have conjectured, as being characteristick of the flagitious act in which they were engaged[a].

Lorenzo prepares for his defence against the

Although the body of troops destined to support the conspirators had kept aloof from the scene of action, and with difficulty effected their retreat

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[z] *V. Vasari, nella vita di Andr. Verocchio*, where a particular account is given of these figures, which were "tanto ben fatti, che rappresentavano non più nomini di "cera, ma vivissimi;" one of them was placed in the church of the Chiariti "dinanzi al Crucifisso *che fa* "*miracoli.*" It appears they were all remaining at the time Vasari wrote.

[a] *Vasari vita di Ant. Pollaiuoli.*—"Fece il medesimo "alcune medaglie bellissime, e fra l' altre in una la con- "giura de' Pazzi; nella quale sono le teste di Lorenzo "e Giuliano de' Medici, e nel riverso il choro di S. Maria "del Fiore, & tutto il caso come passò appunto."

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retreat from the Florentine dominions[b], yet Lorenzo was well aware of the storm that was gathering around him, and with equal prudence and resolution prepared to meet it. By the confession of Montesicco he was fully informed of the implacable hatred of the pope, which was inflamed almost to madness by the miscarriage of his designs, and the publicity of his treachery. Lorenzo also knew that the king of Naples, who was not less formidable to Italy from the ferocity and military reputation of his son Alfonso, duke of Calabria, than from the extent and resources of his own dominions, would most probably concur with the pope. His comprehensive eye saw at one glance the extent of the danger to which he was exposed, and he accordingly adopted every measure that might be likely to oppose or to avert it. He addressed himself to all the Italian states, with strong representations of the conduct of the pope, and entreated them, by every motive which was likely to influence them, to shew their open disapprobation of a species of treachery,

pope and the king of Naples.

[b] "Adfuit eodem die e conjuratis Joannes Franciscus "Tollentinas ex agro Forocorneliensi, cum peditibus "mille, totidemque Laurentius Tifernas ex alia parte, "qui, ubi rem infectam viderunt, magno se periculo "domum receperunt." *Raph. Volater. in Geogr. lib.* 5.

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chery, from which neither rank, nor talents, nor virtue, could afford protection. He adverted to the fatal consequences which must arise to Italy from the subjugation of the Florentine republick, and connected his cause with that of the country at large. In the same terms he wrote to the kings of France and of Spain, endeavouring to obtain their interference in his behalf, and to convince them of the injustice of his enemies, and of his own innocence and moderation[c]. Nor was he negligent in the mean time, in providing for his own defence. By every possible means he incited the citizens of Florence to make preparation for repelling their enemies. He procured from all quarters large supplies of provisions, with every other requisite for supporting an obstinate siege. The activity of Lorenzo infused a similar spirit into those around him; and the hopes of the people were supported by the early appearance, in Mugello, of Giovanni Bentivoglio, the firm ally of the Medici, with a chosen band of soldiers, which

[c] Louis XI. had anticipated his communication by a letter written to Lorenzo, immediately after the intelligence of the assassination had arrived at Paris, in which he expressed the warmest resentment against the authors of the treachery. These letters are yet extant, and are given from the documents of *Fabroni*, in the Appendix, No. XXIV.

which he led to the relief of Lorenzo as soon as he was apprized of his danger. Moved by his representations, or jealous of the power of the pope and of the king of Naples, several other states of Italy warmly espoused the cause of the Florentines. Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara, attended in person with a powerful reenforcement. The Venetians, although cautious in their determination, displayed a manifest partiality to the Florentines; and even the kings of Spain, and of France, transmitted to Lorenzo the fullest assurances of their conviction of the rectitude of his conduct, and of their willingness to interpose with all their authority in his behalf[d]. So

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[d] Philip de Commines was sent by Louis XI. to Florence, from whence he afterwards went to Milan to request the Milanese to send a body of soldiers to the relief of the Florentines, with which he informs us they complied, "tant a la requete du Roi, que pour faire leur "devoir." Speaking of the Florentines, he further adds, "La faveur du Roi leur fait quelque chose: mais non "pas tant que jeusse voulu. Car je n'avoye armée pour "les aider; mais seulement avoye mon train. Je de-"mouray au dit lieu de Florence un an, ou en leurs terri-"toires, & bien traittè d'eux, & a leurs despens, & mieux "le dernier jour que le premier." *Mem. de. P. de Commines, lib.* vi. *c.* 5. For this last assertion the French statesman had sufficient reason; for Ammirato informs us, that at his departure from Florence, the republick presented him with fifty-five pounds weight of wrought silver for the use of his table. *Amm.* iii. 126.

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So favourable a concurrence of circumstances gave fresh spirits to the Florentines, and removed in a great degree the apprehensions of the friends of the Medici. At this juncture Politiano addressed to Gentile d'Urbino, bishop of Arezzo, a Latin ode, which is not less entitled to notice for its intrinsick merit, than as an authentick indication of the publick opinion at the time it was written[e].

Ode of Politiano.

Ad Gentilem Episcopum.

Gentiles animi maxima pars mei,
Communi nimium sorte quid angeris?
Quid curis animum lugubribus teris,
Et me discrucias simul?

Passi

[e] Politiano afterwards sent this poem, with the following address, to Lorenzo de' Medici:

"Qua ode Gentilem nostrum nuper sum consolatus, "eandem quoque ad te mittendam statui, visa est enim "mihi res, quæ non minus ad te, quam ad eum, atque "ad meipsum pertineret. Omnia collegi quæ communem "hunc nostrum dolorem, etsi minus tollere, levare procul "dubio aliqua ex parte possint: Tu, cum tot videas tuæ "saluti tam diligenter invigilare, potes admoneri quam "tibi necesse sit magni teipsum facere; neque tuam, hoc "est publicam totius (ita me deus amet) Italiæ salutem "neglectam pati. Lege et vale."

Pol. Op. Ed. Ald. 1498.

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Passi digna quidem perpetuo sumus
Luctu, qui mediis (heu miseri) sacris
Illum, illum juvenem, vidimus, O nefas!
Stratum sacrilega manu!

At sunt attonito quæ dare pectori
Solamen valeant plurima, nam super
Est, qui vel gremio creverit in tuo,
LAURENS Etruriæ caput.

LAURENS quem patriæ cælicolum pater
Tutum terrifica gorgone præstitit;
Quem Tuscus pariter, quem Venetus Leo
Servant, et Draco pervigil.

Illi bellipotens excubat Hercules;
Illi fatiferis militat arcubus;
Illi mittit equos Francia martios,
Felix Francia regibus.

Circumstat populus murmure dissono;
Circumstant juvenem purpurei patres;
Causa vincimus, et robore militum;
Hac stat Juppiter, hac favet.

Quare, O cum misera quid tibi Nenia,
Si nil proficimus? quin potius gravis
Absterisse bono lætitiæ die
Audes nubila pectoris.

Nam

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Nam cum jam gelidos umbra reliquerit
Artus, non dolor hanc perpetuus retro,
Mordacesve trahunt sollicitudines,
Mentis, curaque pervicax.

O Friend, whose woes this bosom shares,
Why ceaseless mourn our mutual cares ?
Ah why thy days to grief resign,
With thy regrets recalling mine ?

Eternal o'er the atrocious deed,
'Tis true our kindred hearts may bleed ;
When He, twin glory of our land,
Fell by a sacrilegious hand !

But sure, my friend, there yet remains
Some solace for these piercing pains,
Whilst He, once nurtur'd at thy side,
LORENZO lives, Etruria's pride.

LORENZO, o'er whose favour'd head,
Jove his terrifick gorgon spread ;
Whose steps the lion-pair await,
Of *Florence* and *Venetia's* state.

For him his crest the dragon rears :
For him the *Herculean* band appears ;
Her martial succour Gallia brings :
Gallia that glories in her kings !

See

See round the youth the purpled band
Of venerable fathers stand;
Exulting crowds around him throng
And hail him as he moves along.

Strong in our cause and in our friends.
Our righteous battle Jove defends;
Thy useless sorrows then represt,
Let joy once more dilate thy breast.

To animate the clay-cold frame
No sighs shall fan the vital flame;
Nor all the tears that love can shed,
Recall to life the silent dead.

Notwithstanding the vigour and activity of Lorenzo in preparing for the war, he was anxiously desirous of preventing, if possible, such a calamity. By his moderation, and even kindness to the surviving relatives of the conspirators, he thought to obliterate the remembrance of past disturbances, and to unite all the citizens in one common cause. Upwards of one hundred persons had already perished, some by the hands of justice, and others by the fury of the populace[f]. Many had absconded or concealed

Kindness of Lorenzo to the relatives of the conspirators.

[f] In tal che la città tutto era sollevata per il rumore, furono tagliati a pezzi circa venti persone della famiglia del

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concealed themselves under apprehensions of being charged with a participation of the crime. Among the latter was Averardo Salviati, a near relation of the archbishop of Pisa. Lorenzo being informed that he had secreted himself in his house, requested, by the mediation of a common friend, an interview with him, and on his arrival received him with such tokens of kindness and benevolence as drew tears from all who were present[g]. Salviati was not ungrateful: a closer intimacy took place between them, and a few years afterwards Lorenzo gave one of his daughters in marriage to Giacopo Salviati, the nephew of Averardo, whose character and accomplishments merited such an honour. The cardinal Raffaello Riario was liberated as soon as the tumult had subsided, and was suffered to return to Rome[h]. To Raffaello Maffei of Volterra,

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del cardinale, ed altrettanti di quella del Arcivescovo; e tra le fenestre del palagio della Signoria e quelle del podestà furono impiccati circa sessanta persone, tutti congiurati, e molt' altri malconci dalle ferite.

Orig. e descend. della casa de' Med. M. S.

[g] *Valori in vitâ, p.* 35.

[h] Whatever share the cardinal had in the conspiracy, he was by no means insensible of the lenity that had been shewn him. In a letter to the pope of the 10th of June 1478,

Volterra, the brother of Antonio, one of the priests who had undertaken the assassination of Lorenzo, a man distinguished by his uncommon learning and indefatigable spirit of research, Lorenzo wrote a Latin letter, full of kindness and urbanity, which, on account of the elegance of its diction, Maffei erroneously attributed to the pen of Politiano[i]. Even the survivers of the Pazzi family, although they had at first been treated with great severity, were, by the interference of Lorenzo, in a short time restored to their former honours. The only publick monument that remained of this transaction was the painting

1478, some days after he was liberated, he expresses the strongest sense of his obligations to the Florentines, and in particular to Lorenzo de' Medici: he remonstrates with the pope in warm terms on the injustice of subjecting to ecclesiastical censures those persons to whom he is indebted for his preservation; and declares his resolution not to leave Florence until the sentence of excommunication issued by Sixtus be annulled. *v. Apn. No.* XXV.

[i] Mihi quoque, quem Antonii supradicta fratris mei gravis causa suspectum reddere debuerat, Epistolam humanitatis ac officii plenissimam scripsit, adeoque elegantem, ut eam a Politiano scriptam omnino putaverim, nisi ille postea jurasset Laurentii ingenio dictatam, qui paucis, si quando a curis esset vacuus, in hoc genere cederet. *Raph. Volt. Com. Urb. p.* 153. *Ed. Lugd.* 1552.

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painting on the walls of the palace by Andrea dal Castagno, which was suffered to remain, long after the family of the Pazzi had been reinstated in their ancient rights and dignity.

Violence of Sixtus IV.

The generosity and moderation of Lorenzo, although they endeared him still more to his fellow-citizens, had no effect upon the temper of Sixtus, who no sooner heard of the miscarriage of his design, the death of the archbishop, and the restraint imposed upon the cardinal, than he gave a loose to his impetuosity, and poured out against Lorenzo the bitterest invectives. In the first paroxysms of his anger, he directed that the property of the Medici and of all Florentine citizens then in Rome should be confiscated, and the Florentines themselves imprisoned; and had he not entertained apprehensions respecting the fate of the cardinal, it is probable that he would have treated them with still greater severity. To appease his wrath the republick despatched to Rome Donato Acciajuoli, a person no less celebrated for his talents and his learning, than for the credit with which he had performed the most important embassies and filled the highest offices of the state. This measure, far from pacifying the pope, seemed to add fresh fuel to his anger. Instead of attending to the representations of the ambassadour,

sadour, he threatened to send him as a prisoner to the castle of S. Angelo, and would certainly have executed his purpose, had not the legates from Venice and from Milan interfered in his favour, and declared that they should consider such a breach of the faith of nations as an insult to themselves. The resentment of Sixtus then burst forth through another channel. He attacked the Florentines with his spiritual weapons, and anathematized not only Lorenzo de' Medici, but the gonfaloniere and other magistrates of the republick. In the document which Sixtus issued on this occasion, Lorenzo is emphatically styled "the child of iniquity and the nurseling of perdition." After bestowing similar epithets on the magistrates, Sixtus proceeds to relate the manifold offences of Lorenzo against the holy see. Adverting to the gentleness and moderation of his own character, he then declares, that according to the example of our Saviour, he had long suffered in peace the insults and the injuries of his enemies, and that he should still have continued to exercise his forbearance, had not Lorenzo de' Medici, with the magistrates of Florence, and their abetters, discarding the fear of God, inflamed with fury, and instigated by diabolical suggestions, laid violent hands on ecclesiastical persons, *proh dolor et inauditum scelus!* hung up the archbishop, imprisoned the cardinal,

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He excommunicates Lorenzo and the magistrates.

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cardinal, and by various means destroyed and slaughtered their followers. He then solemnly excommunicates Lorenzo, the gonfaloniere, and other officers of the state, and their immediate successours; declaring them to be incapable of receiving or transmitting property by inheritance or will; and prohibiting their descendants from enjoying any ecclesiastical employment. By the same instrument he suspended the bishops and clergy of the Florentine territories from the exercise of their spiritual functions[k].

Singular reply of the Florentine Synod.

Whatever might have been the effect of this denunciation, if directed solely against the persons immediately concerned in the transactions to which the pope referred, it appears, that in extending his censures to the dignitaries of the church, who were not personally implicated in the imputed guilt, Sixtus had exceeded his authority; and the exasperated ecclesiasticks, availing

[k] Although this piece be of considerable length, I have thought proper to give it a place in the Appendix. First, because Sixtus, labouring under such imputations, ought to be allowed to relate his own story. Secondly, because this document will throw farther light on many of the facts before adverted to; and lastly, because it is one of the most extraordinary specimens of priestly arrogance that ever insulted the common sense of mankind. *v. Appx. No.* XXVI.

availing themselves of his imprudence, retorted upon the pope the anathemas which he had poured out against them. The most eminent civilians of the time were consulted on this occasion, many of whom asserted the nullity of the prohibition. By the exertions of Gentile d'Urbino, bishop of Arezzo, a convocation was summoned in the church of the Reparata, and Fabroni has produced, from the archives of Florence, a document yet remaining in the handwriting of Gentile, which purports to be the result of the deliberations which there took place[1]. The professed tendency of this piece is to criminate the pope as being the chief instigator of

[1] Fabroni conjectures that this convocation was not held; but for this opinion he adduces no reasons; and other historians have related it as a well-known circumstance. Some doubt may perhaps remain whether the document, purporting to be the act of the synod, was in fact adopted there, or whether it was merely proposed for the approbation of the assembly; though the presumption is in favour of the former opinion. For producing a document addressed in such contumelious terms to the head of the church, Fabroni thinks it necessary to apologize: "Vererer reprehensionem prudentum, quod "talia, injuriosa sane Sixto pontifici ediderim, nisi his- "torici munus esset referre omnia quæ dicta et acta sunt." *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* ii. *p.* 136. Happily I can lay this piece before my readers without a similar precaution.

v. Appx. No. XXVIII.

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of the enormities committed at Florence, and to exculpate Lorenzo de' Medici and the Florentines from the charges which Sixtus had brought against them; but this vindication would have lost nothing of its effect, if, in exposing the guilt of the pontiff, it had consulted the dignity of those he had injured, and exhibited a more temperate and dispassionate refutation. How so unmodified and daring an attack can be reconciled to the catholick idea of the infallibility of the holy see, it is not easy to discover. If it be acknowledged that the bull of Sixtus had exceeded all the limits of decorum, it must also be allowed that the reply of the synod is in this respect equally censurable; nor is it in the power of language to convey a more copious torrent of abuse, than was poured out upon this occasion by the Florentine clergy, on the supreme director of the Roman church.

Sixtus attempts to prevail on the Florentines to deliver up Lorenzo.

Sixtus did not however relax from his purpose. Whilst he brandished in one hand the spiritual weapon, which has impressed with terrour the proudest sovereigns of Europe, in the other he grasped a temporal sword, which he now openly, as he had before secretly, aimed at the life of Lorenzo. At his instigation the king of Naples despatched an envoy to Florence, to prevail upon the citizens to deliver up Lorenzo into

into the hands of his enemies, or at least to banish him from the Tuscan territories. The alternative denounced to them was the immediate vengeance of both the king and the pope. These threats had not, however, the intended effect, but on the contrary produced another instance of the attachment of the Florentines to Lorenzo. They not only refused to comply with the proposition of the king, but avowed their firm resolution to suffer every extremity, rather than betray a man with whose safety and dignity those of the republick were so nearly connected. They also directed their chancellor Bartolomeo Scala to draw up an historical memorial of all the proceedings of the conspiracy[m]; by which it clearly appeared, that throughout the whole transaction the conspirators had acted with the privity and assent of the pope[n].

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Lorenzo

[m] *v. Appi. No.* XXVIII. Several eminent scholars also testified their readiness to transmit to posterity the memory of this transaction. Even Filelfo, the ancient adversary of the family, offered his pen to Lorenzo on this occasion. *v. Appi. No.* XXIX.

[n] As to the atrocity of the crime, and the turpitude of the authors of it, contemporary historians are agreed. It is only in our days that an attempt has been made to transfer the guilt from its perpetrators, to those who suffered

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Lorenzo was now fully apprized of the danger of his situation. It was sufficiently evident

Danger of his situation.

suffered by it. The *Conspiracy of the Pazzi* has afforded a subject for a tragedy to a celebrated living author, who in his various dramatick works, has endeavoured, not without success, to accustom his countrymen to bolder sentiment, and to remove the idea that the genius of the Italian language is not adapted to the purposes of tragedy. It must however be confessed, that in attempting to render this transaction subservient to the interests of freedom, by his *Congiura de' Pazzi*, he has fallen greatly short of that effect which several of his other pieces produce. The causes of this failure are not difficult to discover. In selecting a subject for tragedy, the author may either derive his materials from his own fancy, or he may choose some known historical transaction. The first of these is the creature of the poet, the second he can only avail himself of so far as acknowledged historical facts allow. In the one the imagination is predominant; in the other, it is subservient to the illustration of truths previously understood, and generally admitted. What then shall we think of a dramatick performance in which the Pazzi are the champions of liberty? in which superstition is called in to the aid of truth, and Sixtus consecrates the holy weapons devoted to the slaughter of the two brothers? in which the relations of all the parties are confounded, and a tragick effect is attempted to be produced by a total dereliction of historical veracity, an assumption of falsehood for truth, of vice for virtue? In this tragedy Guglielmo de' Pazzi, (there called Raimondi,) who married Bianca the sister of Lorenzo is the chief of the conspirators, and, failing in his attempt, executes

evident that this powerful league was not formed against the Florentines, but against himself; and that the evils of war might be avoided by a compliance with the requisition of the king. Under these circumstances, instead of sheltering himself in the affections of his fellow-citizens, he boldly opposed himself to the danger that threatened him, and resolved either to fall with dignity, or to render his own cause that of the republick at large. He therefore called together about three

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executes vengeance on himself: but Machiavelli expressly informs us, that "Gulielmo de' Pazzi, di Lorenzo "cognato, nelle case di quello, e per l' innocenza sua, e "per l' auta di Bianca sua moglie, si salvò:" *Hist. lib.* 8. whereas Francesco, the leader of the assassins, and who was not related to the Medici, died by a halter. If we are surprised at so extraordinary a perversion of incident and character, we are not less so in perusing the remarks with which the author has accompanied his tragedy, in which he avows an opinion, that Lorenzo would be too insignificant even to be the object of a conspiracy, if he had not lent him a fictitious importance! It is to be hoped that the better information, or the riper judgment of this feeling author, will induce him to form a more just estimation of the character of a man, whose name is the chief honour of his country; and to adopt the converse of the assertion with which he concludes his remarks on this tragedy, "che per nessuna cosa del "mondo non vorrebbe l' aver fatta."

Trag. del Conte Vittorio Alfieri. vol. iv. *Paris. ap. Didot,* 1788.

CHAP. IV. three hundred of the principal citizens, whom he addressed in a striking and energetick harangue, at the close of which he earnestly besought them, that as the publick tranquillity could not be preserved by other means, nor a treaty effected with their enemies unless it was sealed with his blood, they would no longer hesitate to comply with the terms proposed, nor suffer their attention to the safety of an individual to bring destruction upon the state. When Lorenzo had concluded, Giacopo de' Alessandri, with the concurrence of every person present, declared it to be the unanimous resolution of the whole assembly to defend his life at the hazard of their own[o].

All was now prepared for war, the approaching horrours of which were increased by the appearance of the plague at Florence. In this emergency Lorenzo thought it advisable to send his wife and children to Pistoia. "I now "remove from you," said he to the citizens, "these objects of my affection, whom I would, "if necessary, willingly devote for your welfare; "that whatever may be the result of this contest, "the

[o] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8. *Amm. v.* iii. *p.* 123. *Fabr. in vitâ, v.* i. *p.* 87.

"the resentment of my enemies may be appeased "with my blood only." CHAP. IV.

Conduct of the war.

Though the duke of Calabria and the count of Urbino were esteemed the most formidable commanders of Italy, the Florentines could boast of men of great eminence and experience in the military art; but the supreme command was intrusted to Ercole d' Este, duke of Ferrara. The enemy were now approaching towards Florence, and marked their way with devastation. After possessing themselves of several smaller places, they at length besieged Arezzo, but on the approach of the Florentine troops they prepared for an engagement. Notwithstanding the inferiority of the latter in the reputation of their generals, and in the number of their soldiers, they possessed such advantages as it was supposed would, in case of a general engagement, have ensured their success. The citizens of Arezzo by a vigorous defence had damped the spirits of the Papal and Neapolitan troops, who experienced also a scarcity of provisions, and were very disadvantageously posted; but after the two armies had regarded each other for some time with mutual apprehensions, a truce was proposed by the duke of Urbino, which was acceded to by the duke of Ferrara, to the great dissatisfaction of the Florentines, who

CHAP. IV. who conceived that their general had betrayed their cause. The two armies retired into their winter quarters; and the Florentines found themselves encumbered with great and increasing expense, without being relieved from their fears[p].

Lorenzo negotiates for peace.

This season, however, afforded Lorenzo another opportunity of trying the result of further negotiation; but whilst he endeavoured on the one hand to reconcile himself to the pope, on the other hand, he made preparations to meet his enemies, in case his negotiations should prove unsuccessful. From the connexion between his family and that of Sforza, he had promised himself powerful support from Milan; but the disagreement between the dutchess and Lodovico Sforza, which terminated in the latter assuming the regency during the minority of the young duke, in a great degree disappointed his hopes. The Venetians had sent Bernardo Bembo, the father of the celebrated Pietro Bembo[q], as their ambassadour to Florence, and professed

[p] *Mac. Hist, lib.* 8.

[q] On this occasion Bernardo was accompanied by his son, then only nine years of age. He remained there about

professed themselves inimical to the proceedings of the pope and the king. They did not, however, yet think proper to engage in the war; but with that species of policy by which they were always distinguished, looked on for the purpose of taking advantage of any opportunity of aggrandizing themselves at the expense of their neighbours. In the course of the winter, different envoys arrived at Florence from the emperour and the kings of France and Bohemia, who repeated to Lorenzo their assurances of attachment and support, at the same time advising him once more to attempt a reconciliation with the pope, under the sanction of their names and influence. A deputation, consisting of several of the most respectable citizens of Florence, was

about two years; and to this circumstance his historian, Casa, attributes the proficiency he made in the Italian tongue, of which he was destined to be one of the brightest ornaments. "Nec vero patris consilium filii fefellit industria: sic enim excitatum puerile Bembi ingenium "Florentiæ est, sic teneræ pueri aures, animusque, puro "ac dulci illo Etruscorum sermone imbutus, ut jam inde "a prima adolescentia, multa cum Latine, tum vero "Tusce, a se scripta ediderit, quibus nihil hominum "auribus politius, nihil omnino elegantius aut suavius "accidere possit."

Joh. Casa in vitâ P. Bembi. in Op. Cas. v. iv. *p.* 46. *Ed. Ven.* 1728.

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was accordingly sent to Rome; but Sixtus still remained inflexible, and paid no more regard to the recommendations of the European sovereigns, than he had before done to the entreaties and remonstrances of Lorenzo himself.

In order to testify to the king of France the sense which they entertained of his interposition, the Florentines despatched Donato Acciajuoli as their ambassadour to Paris. Shortly after his departure, intelligence was received at Florence of his death, which happened at Milan as he was pursuing his journey. This circumstance was a subject of the sincerest grief to the Florentines, who well knew how to appreciate the virtues of their fellow-citizens, and omitted no opportunity of inciting the patriotism of the living, by the honours they bestowed on the memory of the dead. A sumptuous funeral was decreed to his remains; Lorenzo de' Medici and three other eminent citizens were appointed curators of his children, who were declared to be exempt from the payment of taxes; and the daughters had considerable portions assigned them from the publick treasury[r].

Death of Donato Acciajuoli.

Besides

[r] *Amm. Iet. v.* iii. *fi.* 126.

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Various success of the war.

Besides the duke of Ferrara, the Florentines had, during the course of the winter, prevailed upon several other experienced commanders, amongst whom were Roberto Malatesta, Constantino Sforza, and Rodolfo Gonzaga, to espouse their cause. The states of Venice also at length sent a reenforcement under the command of Carlo Montone and Deifebo d' Anguillari: by these powerful succours the Florentines found themselves enabled to take the field in the ensuing spring with great expectations of success. Imboldened by this support, they determined to carry on a war not merely defensive. Their troops were divided into two bodies, one of which was destined to make an irruption into the territories of the pope, and the other to oppose the duke of Calabria. At the approach of Montone, who intended to attack Perugia, the troops of the pope made a precipitate retreat; but the unexpected death of that commander relieved them in some degree from their fears, and they at length ventured to oppose the further progress of the Florentines. The two armies met near the lake of Perugia, the ancient Thrasymenus, rendered remarkable by the defeat which the Romans experienced there from the arms of Hannibal. Struck with the similarity of their situation, a sentiment of terrour pervaded the papal troops, who were soon

CHAP. IV. soon repulsed, and obliged to quit the field with considerable loss, whilst the successful army proceeded to invest Perugia. The other division of the Florentine troops was not equally successful. The mercenary views of the different commanders, who preferred plunder to victory, defeated the hopes which the Florentines had justly formed of their success. A disagreement took place among the leaders; in consequence of which the duke of Ferrara, with his own immediate followers, retired from the service of the republick. Availing himself of this opportunity, the duke of Calabria made an instantaneous attack upon the Florentines, who having lost all confidence in their commanders, pusillanimously deserted their standards, and consulted their safety by a shameful flight. The consternation occasioned at Florence by this disaster is scarcely to be described, as it was supposed that the duke of Calabria would immediately proceed to the attack of the city; and this distress was heightened by the ravages of the plague, and by impending famine. Happily, however, the apprehensions of the Florentines on this occasion were not wholly realized. Instead of proceeding towards Florence, the duke rather chose to employ himself in plundering the surrounding country. The capture of the town of Colle, which made an obstinate

obstinate resistance, and of some adjacent places of less importance, engaged his attention till the detachment that had been sent to the attack of Perugia, having suddenly raised the siege, returned towards Florence, and alleviated the fears of the citizens. An unexpected proposition made by the duke of Calabria for a truce of three months, was cheerfully assented to by the Florentines, who thus once more obtained a temporary relief from a state of anxiety and a profusion of expense, which were become equally insupportable[s]. CHAP. IV.

Lorenzo resolves to visit the king of Naples.

But although by this cessation of hostilities the tranquillity of the city was for a time restored, the situation of Lorenzo de' Medici was in the highest degree critical and alarming. He had witnessed the terrours of the populace on the approach of the Neapolitan army; and although he had great confidence in the affection of the citizens, yet as the war was avowedly waged against him as an individual, and might at any time be concluded by delivering him up to his enemies, he knew enough of human nature to be convinced that he had just grounds

[s] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8. *Amm. v.* iii. *fl.* 142.

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grounds to dread the event. The rising discontents and murmurs of the people increased his suspicion; even the truce was unfavourable to him, as it gave the Florentines an opportunity of estimating the injuries they had sustained by the war, which, like wounds received by an individual in the ardour of action, were not fully felt till the heat of the contest had subsided[t]. Complaints began to be heard that the publick treasure was exhausted, and the commerce of the city ruined, whilst the citizens were burdened with oppressive taxes. Insinuations of a more personal nature were not always suppressed; and Lorenzo had the mortification of being told, that sufficient blood had been already shed, and that it would be expedient for him rather to devise some means of effecting a peace than of making further preparations for the war[u]. Under these circumstances, he resolved to adopt some measure which should effectually close the contest, although with the hazard of his life. In deliberating on the mode of accomplishing his purpose, his genius suggested to him one of those bold expedients, which only great minds can conceive and execute. This was secretly to quit

[t] *Mac. Hist. lib.* 8.

[u] *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 100.

quit the city of Florence, to proceed immediately to Naples, and to place himself in the hands of Ferdinand, his avowed enemy; with the determination either to convince him of the injustice and impolicy of his conduct, and thereby induce him to agree to a separate peace, or to devote himself to the preservation of his country. CHAP. IV.

In the commencement of the month of December 1479, Lorenzo accordingly left the city, without having communicated his intentions to his fellow-citizens, and proceeded to San Miniato, a town in the Florentine state, whence he addressed a letter to the magistrates of Florence, which places the motives of his conduct in a very clear point of view[w]. His letter to the magistrates of Florence.

Lorenzo

[w] It is somewhat surprising that this letter, so explicitly stating the purpose of Lorenzo, should have escaped the attention of Fabroni; who has, however, favoured us with the oration of Lorenzo to Ferdinand, on his arrival at Naples, the authority of which may perhaps be doubted; as well as that of Lorenzo to the magistrates of Florence before his departure for Naples, attributed to him by Ammirato. *Ist. v.* iii. *p.* 143. The efforts of imagination should not be substituted for the documents of history. This letter is published in the *Lettere di Principi*, *v.* i. *p.* 3. *Ed. Ven.* 1581.

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Lorenzo de' Medici to the States of Florence.

" If I did not explain to you, before I left " Florence, the cause of my departure, it was " not from want of respect, but because I " thought, that in the dangerous circumstances " in which our city is placed, it was more neces- " sary to act than to deliberate. It seems to me " that peace is become indispensable to us; and " as all other means of obtaining it have proved " ineffectual, I have rather chosen to incur " some degree of danger myself, than to suffer " the city to continue longer under its present " difficulties: I therefore mean, with your " permission, to proceed directly to Naples; " conceiving that as I am the person chiefly " aimed at by our enemies, I may, by deliver- " ing myself into their hands, perhaps be the " means of restoring peace to my fellow-citizens. " Of these two things, one must be taken for " granted; either the king of Naples, as he has " often asserted, and as some have believed, is " friendly to the Florentine state, and aims, " even by these hostile proceedings, rather to " render us a service, than to deprive us of our " liberties; or he wishes to effect the ruin of " the republick. If he be favourably disposed " towards us, there is no better method of " putting his intention to the test, than by " placing

" placing myself freely in his hands, and this I CHAP. IV.
" will venture to say is the only mode of
" obtaining an honourable peace. If, on the
" other hand, the views of the king extend to
" the subversion of our liberties, we shall at
" least be speedily apprized of his intentions;
" and this knowledge will be more cheaply
" obtained by the ruin of one, than of all. I
" am contented to take upon myself this risk,
" because, as I am the person principally sought
" after, I shall be a better test of the king's
" intentions; it being possible that my destruc-
" tion is all that is aimed at: and again, as I
" have had more honour and consideration
" amongst you than my merits could claim,
" and perhaps more than have in our days been
" bestowed on any private citizen, I conceive
" myself more particularly bound than any
" other person to promote the interest of my
" country, even with the sacrifice of my life.
" With this full intention I now go; and per-
" haps it may be the will of God, that as this war
" was begun in the blood of my brother, and
" of myself, it may now by my means be con-
" cluded. All that I desire is, that my life and
" my death, my prosperity and my misfortunes,
" may contribute towards the welfare of my
" native place. Should the result be answer-
" able to my wishes, I shall rejoice in having
" obtained

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" obtained peace to my country, and security to " myself. Should it prove otherwise, my mis- " fortunes will be alleviated by the idea that " they were requisite for my country's welfare ; " for if our adversaries aim only at my destruc- " tion, I shall be in their power ; and if their " views extend further, they will then be fully " understood. In the latter case, I doubt not " that all my fellow-citizens will unite in defend- " ing their liberties to the last extremity, and I " trust with the same success as, by the favour " of God, our ancestors have heretofore done. " These are the sentiments with which I shall " proceed ; entreating Heaven that I may be " enabled on this occasion to perform what " every citizen ought at all times to be ready " to perform for his country. *From San* " *Miniato, the 7th December* 1479[x]."

The departure of Lorenzo upon so novel and so dangerous an expedition, occasioned various opinions and conjectures at Florence. Those who

[x] Valori informs us, that when the letter of Lorenzo was recited in the senate, not one of the assembly could refrain from tears. " Litteræ recitatæ sunt in Senatu, " assensu vario, ita tamen, ut nemo a lachrymis tempe- " raret. Movebat omnes tanti viri desiderium, qui pro " salute patriæ nullis suis laboribus, aut periculis par- " ceret." *Val. in vitâ Laur. p.* 33.

who were friendly to the Medici, or who were interested in the personal welfare of Lorenzo, could not regard this measure without great anxiety. Even those who entertained the highest opinion of his prudence were inclined to consider his conduct in this instance as rash and inconsiderate, and as having resulted rather from the impulse of the moment, than from that mature deliberation which generally preceded his determinations[y]. They remembered the fate of Giacopo Piccinini, who with more claims on the favour of Ferdinand than Lorenzo could pretend to, had, on a visit to him at Naples, in violation of all the laws of honour and hospitality, been thrown into a dungeon, and soon afterwards secretly murdered[z]. Those who enter-

[y] *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 533.

[z] Piccinini was one of the most eminent *Condottieri* of his time, and by his valour had acquired the absolute sovereignty of several towns in Italy, and raised himself to such consideration as to obtain in marriage Drusiana, one of the daughters of the great Francesco Sforza duke of Milan. Soon after his marriage he was invited by Ferdinand, who had some secret cause of enmity against him, to pass a short time at Naples, whither he went, accompanied by his new bride, and fell an easy victim to the treachery of Ferdinand; who, not being able to allege any

CHAP. IV. entertained better hopes, founded them on a conjecture that Lorenzo had previously obtained an assurance from Ferdinand of a welcome reception, and a safe return; which assurance was supposed to be sanctioned by the other states of Italy. In proportion as his friends were alarmed at the dangers that threatened him, those who feared, or who envied the authority which he had obtained in Florence, rejoiced in the probability of his destruction; and by affecting on all occasions to express their apprehensions of his ruin, and of a consequent change of government in Florence, endeavoured as far as in their power to prepare the way for those events[a].

He embarks at Pisa.

From San Miniato, Lorenzo went to Pisa, where he received from the magistrates of Florence their unlimited authority to enter into such conditions with the king as he might think advisable[b]. Thence he embarked for Naples, and

any plausible reason for this atrocious act, endeavoured to propagate a report that Piccinini had broken his neck by a fall from the window of the place of his confinement. *v. Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *fl.* 493.

[a] *Mac. Ist. lib.* 8.

[b] The instructions sent by the magistracy of Florence to Lorenzo on this occasion were drawn up by Bartolomeo

and on his arrival there was surprised, but certainly not displeased, to find that the king had information of his approach, and had directed the commanders of his gallies to receive him with due honour. This token of respect was confirmed by the presence of the king's son Federigo, and his grandson Ferdinand, who met Lorenzo on his landing, and conducted him to the presence of the king[c]. The Neapolitans testified their eagerness to see a man who had been the object of such contention, and whose character and accomplishments were the subject of general admiration. On his interview with Ferdinand, Lorenzo omitted nothing that was likely to conciliate his esteem, and attach him to his cause. Fully acquainted with the political state of Italy, and with the temper and intentions of its different potentates, he demonstrated to Ferdinand the impolicy of separating the interests of the Neapolitans from those of the Florentines. He reminded him of the dangers which the kingdom of Naples had repeatedly

Bartolomeo Scala, the chancellor of the republick, who transmitted them to Lorenzo, accompanied by a private letter, strongly expressive of his anxiety for the success of his patron in this dangerous expedition.

v. Appx. No. XXX.

[c] *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 34.

CHAP. IV. repeatedly experienced from the pretensions of the holy see, and thence adverted to the imprudence of contributing to the aggrandizement of the papal power. Nor was he silent on that flagrant breach of divine and human laws, which had deprived him of a brother, and endangered his own life; from which he justly inferred, that the perpetrators of such a crime could be bound by no engagements but such as suited their own interest or ambition. To representations thus forcibly urged, it was impossible that the king could be inattentive; and although he did not immediately comply with the wishes of Lorenzo, yet he gave him hopes of eventual success, and treated him with every distinction due to his character, expressing his approbation of him in the words of Claudian, "*vicit præ-*" *sentia famam*[d].

Lorenzo concludes a treaty with the king.

During the abode of Lorenzo at Naples, which was protracted by the cautious hesitation of the king, he rendered his liberality, his taste, and his urbanity, subservient to the promotion of his political views, and was careful that the expectations formed of him by the populace should not be disappointed. His wealth and his

[d] *Val. in vitâ Laur. p.* 34.

his munificence seemed to be equally boundless, and were displayed amongst other instances, in apportioning out in marriage young women of the lower rank, who resorted to Naples from the remotest parts of Calabria and Appulia to share his bounty[e]. The pleasures which he experienced from thus gratifying his natural disposion, were however counterbalanced by the anxiety of his solitary moments, when the difficulties which he had to encounter pressed upon his mind with a weight almost irresistible[f]. The disposition of Ferdinand was severe and unrelenting; from an appeal to his feelings little was to be expected; his determination could only be influenced by motives of policy or of interest. The conquests of his son Alfonso had rendered him less favourable to the views of Lorenzo; and it was particularly unfortunate, that whilst the negotiation was depending, Alfonso broke the stipulated truce, and gained advantages over the Florentine troops. The pope had also received intelligence of the arrival of

CHAP. IV.

[e] *Val. in vitâ, p.* 35.

[f] Addebant, qui se in die omnibus hilarem, gratumque præbebat, eundem in nocte, quasi duas personas gereret, secum ad miserationem usque lamentari solitum, nunc suam ipsius, nunc patriæ vicem dolere.

Val. in vitâ. p. 36.

CHAP. IV.

of Lorenzo at Naples, and exerted all his interest with Ferdinand to prevail upon him either to detain Lorenzo there, or to send him to Rome, on pretence of accommodating his difference with the holy see, and effecting a general peace. Notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, Lorenzo did not relax in the pursuit of his object, nor betray in publick the least appearance of dejection. He had already obtained the confidence of Caraffa, count of Metalonica, the minister of Ferdinand, and made daily progress in the affections of the king himself, who was at length induced seriously to weigh his propositions, and to consider the advantages that might result to himself and his family, by attaching to his interests a man of such talents and influence, now in the prime of life, and daily rising in the publick estimation. Led by these considerations, and by the unwearied assiduities of Lorenzo, he at length gave way to his solicitations; and having once adopted a decided opinion, became as warmly devoted to Lorenzo, as he before had been inimical to him. The conditions of the treaty were accordingly agreed on[g]; and Lorenzo, who had arrived at Naples

[g] These conditions were, that the parties should mutually assist each other in the defence of their dominions. That

Naples not merely an unprotected stranger, but an open enemy, left that place at the end of three months, in the character of an ally and a friend. CHAP. IV.

Having thus accomplished his purpose, he instantly embarked for Pisa, notwithstanding the entreaties of Ferdinand, who wished to prolong his stay. His apology to the king for this apparent want of respect, was the desire that he had to communicate to his fellow-citizens, as speedily as possible, the happy result of his expedition; but the excuses of Lorenzo were urged with a levity and jocularity which he judged most likely to conceal his real motives, and to prevent the suspicions of Ferdinand. Shortly before his departure the king presented to him a beautiful horse, and Lorenzo returned his thanks by observing, *That the messenger of joyful news ought to be well mounted.* He had, however, more urgent 1480.

That the places which had been taken from the Florentines should be restored at the discretion of the king. That the survivers of the Pazzi family should be liberated from the tower of Volterra; and that the duke of Calabria should receive a certain sum of money to defray the expenses of his return. *Amm. Ist. v.* iii. *p.* 145.

CHAP. IV.

urgent reasons for his haste: every moment that delayed his return gave encouragement to his enemies, and endangered his authority at Florence; but above all, he was apprehensive that the repeated remonstrances of the pope might induce the king to waver in his resolution, or to change his opinion. The event proved that his distrust was not unfounded; Lorenzo had no sooner sailed from Naples, than a messenger arrived there from Rome, with such propositions to the king, on the part of the pope, as would in all probability not only have defeated the treaty, but have led the way to the ruin of Lorenzo de' Medici. Such was the effect which this communication had on the mind of the king, that he despatched a letter to Lorenzo, entreating him, in the most pressing language, that at whatever place he might receive it, he would immediately return to Naples, where the ambassadour of Sixtus was ready to accede to the articles of pacification. Having once escaped from the jaws of the lion, Lorenzo did not think proper a second time to confide in his clemency; and his determination was probably confirmed by the tenour of the letter from Ferdinand, which discovers such an extreme degree of anxiety for the accomplishment of his purpose, as seems scarcely consistent

consistent with an open and generous intention[h]. CHAP. IV.

After touching at Leghorn, Lorenzo returned to Pisa, where the event of his embassy being known, he was received with the utmost demonstrations of joy. Thence he hastened to Florence, where the exultation of the populace was unbounded. Secured from the storm that had so long threatened to burst upon their heads, and restored to tranquillity by the magnanimity of a single citizen, they set no limits to their applause. All ranks of people surrounded and congratulated Lorenzo on his return. His faithful associate Politiano, having struggled in vain to approach his patron, expressed his affection in a few extempore stanzas, in which is given a lively picture of this interesting scene; where Lorenzo is represented as towering above his fellow-citizens, by his superiour stature, and expressing his sense of their kindness by all the means in his power, by his smiles, his nods, his voice, and his hands[i].

The

[h] *v. App. No.* XXXI.

[i] *Ad Laurentium Medicem.*

" O ego quam cupio reducis contingere dextram
" Laurenti ! et læto dicere lætus, ave !

" Maxima

CHAP. IV.

Sixtus persevères in the war.

The reconciliation which had thus been effected between the king of Naples and the republick of Florence, was a cause of vexation not only to the pope, but to the Venetians, who expressed great dissatisfaction that a measure of such importance should have been adopted without their previous concurrence. In order to excuse to the pope the step which he had taken, Ferdinand alleged his apprehensions from the Turks, who had long threatened a descent upon Italy. Sixtus did not, however, relinquish the prosecution of his favourite object, the destruction of Lorenzo de' Medici, in which he was constantly

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" Maxima sed densum capiunt vix atria vulgus,
" Tota salutantum vocibus aula fremit.
" Undique purpurei Medicem pia turba senatus
" Stat circum ; cunctis celsior ipse patet.
" Quid faciam ? accedam ?—nequeo ;—vetat invida
" turba.
" Alloquar ?—at pavido torpet in ore sonus.
" Aspiciam !—licet hoc, toto nam vertice supra est,
" Non omne officium, turba molesta, negas.
" Aspice sublimi quum vertice fundit honorem,
" Sidereo quantum spargit ab ore jubar.
" Quæ reducis facies, lætis quam lætus amicis !
" Respondet nutu, lumine, voce, manu.
" Nil agimus : cupio solitam de more salutem
" Dicere, et officium persoluisse meum.
" Ite mei versus, Medicique hæc dicite nostro,
" Angelus hoc mittit Politanus, ave"

Pol. in Op. ap. Ald.

constantly incited to persevere, by his nephew Girolamo Riario, whose hatred to Lorenzo was unalterable. To no purpose did the Florentines despatch a new embassy to Rome to deprecate the wrath, and entreat the clemency of the pope. Riario began to make preparations for renewing the war; and at his instance the duke of Calabria, instead of withdrawing his troops from Tuscany, remained at Sienna, where he continued to exercise great authority, and to fill with apprehensions the surrounding country. But while the affairs of Florence remained in this state of suspense, a more general alarm took place, and speedily accomplished what the intercessions and humiliation of the Florentines might have failed of effecting. Mahomet II. the conqueror of Constantinople, was yet living, and meditated further victories. In turning his arms westward, he first attacked the island of Rhodes; but being delayed and irritated by a vigorous defence, he determined to retrieve his military credit by making a descent upon Italy, where he captured the important city of Otranto, and threatened the whole extent of that country with devastation and slavery. CHAP. IV.

Descent of the Turks upon Italy.

This alarming incident roused the adjacent states of Italy to their defence. So opportunely did it occur for the safety of Lorenzo, that it has

CHAP. IV. has given rise to an opinion that he incited and encouraged it[k]. But if Mahomet had in fact any invitation upon this occasion, it was most probably from the Venetians, who were strongly suspected of having favoured his purpose; and this suspicion was afterwards strengthened by the reluctance which they shewed to unite with the other states of Italy in expelling the Turks from Otranto[l]. Compelled to attend to the defence of his own country, the duke of Calabria suddenly withdrew his troops from Sienna; and the pope of his own motion gave the Florentines to understand,

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[k] *Albinus, p.* 35. de bello Etrusco. *Camillus Portius* la Conguira de' Baroni di Napoli contro il Re Ferdinando I. et *Jannonius* ap. *Fabronium. v.* ii. *p.* 216. *v. also Swinburn's Travels in the two Sicilies, p.* 377.

[l] "Sospettarono i Napolitani," says Muratori, "che "Maometto, o pure il suo Bassà Achmet, fosse stato "mosso a questa impresa dai Veneziani, per l'odio grande "che portavano al Re Ferdinando." *Murat. Ann. v.* ix. *p.* 535. That Ferdinand did not suppose Lorenzo had any share in instigating Mahomet to this enterprise, is evident from his subsequent letters to him, several of which yet remain. Fabroni has also preserved a letter from Lorenzo de' Medici to Albino, who attended the duke of Calabria on his expedition to Otranto, in which he expresses his strong aversion to the *Cani Turchi*, as he denominates the invaders, and his extreme and perhaps courtly solicitude for the success and personal safety of the duke. *v. Appx. No.* XXXII.

understand, that, on a proper submission, he should now listen to terms of reconciliation. Twelve of the most respectable citizens were sent to Rome, as a deputation in the name of the republick; but although the pope expressed his desire that Lorenzo should be of the number, he wisely judged that such a measure would neither be consistent with his honour nor his safety. Francesco Soderini, bishop of Volterra, made the oration to the pope; who, in his reply, once more gave way to his anger, and, in very severe language, reproached the Florentines with their disobedience to the holy see. Having vented his rage, he received their submission; and in milder terms reconciled them to the church; at the same time touching their backs with a wand, according to the usual ceremony, and releasing the city from his interdict.

CHAP. IV.

Peace concluded with the pope.

CHAP. V.

STUDIES of Lorenzo de' Medici—Rise of Italian literature in the fourteenth century—Its subsequent degradation—Revivers of it in the fifteenth century—Burchiello—The three brothers of the Pulci—Writings of Bernardo Pulci—Of Luca Pulci—Of Luigi Pulci—Of Matteo Franco—Early productions of Lorenzo—Inquiry into his merits as a poet—Object and characteristicks of poetry—Description—Talents of Lorenzo for description—Poetick comparison—Instances of it from the writings of Lorenzo—Personification of material objects—Of the passions and affections—Comparative excellence of the ancients and moderns in the PROSOPOPOEIA—*Instances of this figure in the writings of Lorenzo—Various species of poetry cultivated by him—Origin of the Italian sonnet—Character of the sonnets of Dante—Of Petrarca—Of Lorenzo de' Medici—*SELVE D' AMORE *of Lorenzo—His poem of* AMBRA*—On hawking—Moral pieces—Sacred poems—The* BEONI*—Rise of the jocose Italian satire—*STANZE CONTADINESCHE*—State of the Italian Drama—The musical drama—*CANTI CARNASCIALESCHI*—*CANZONE A BALLO*—Critique of Pico of Mirandula on the poems of Lorenzo—Opinions of other authors on the same subject—The poems of Lorenzo celebrated in the* NUTRICIA *of Politiano.*

CHAP. V.

THE establishment of peace was a blessing which Lorenzo felt in common with the rest of his fellow-citizens; but to him it was peculiarly grateful, as it left him at liberty to attend to the prosecution of those studies in which he had always found his most unembittered pleasures, and the surest alleviation of his cares. "When my mind is disturbed with the "tumults of publick business," says he, writing to Ficino, "and my ears are stunned with the "clamours of turbulent citizens, how would it "be possible for me to support such contention "unless I found a relaxation in science?" Nor was it to any particular study, in exclusion of all

Studies of Lorenzo de' Medici.

CHAP. V. all others that he addicted himself during his hours of leisure, although poetry had in his younger years a decided preference. "So "vigorous and yet so various was his genius," says Pico of Mirandula, "that he seemed "equally formed for every pursuit; but that "which principally excites my wonder is, that "even when he is deeply engaged in the affairs "of the republick, his conversation and his "thoughts should be turned to subjects of lite-"rature as if he were perfect master of his "time[m]." Lorenzo was not, however, insensible that, amidst his serious and important avocations, the indulgence of a poetical taste might be considered as indicating a levity of disposition inconsistent with his character. There are "some," says he[n], "who may perhaps accuse "me of having dissipated my time in writing "and commenting upon amorous subjects, par-"ticularly in the midst of my numerous and "unavoidable occupations: to this accusation I "have to reply, that I might indeed be justly "condemned if Nature had endowed mankind "with

[m] *In Proem. ad tract. de ente et uno, ad Angelum Politianum inter. Pici. Ed. Ven.* 1498.

[n] *Commento di Lorenzo sopra alcuni di suoi sonetti, Ed. Aldo*, 1554.

" with the power of performing, at all times, CHAP. V.
" those things which are most truly commenda-
" ble; but inasmuch as this power has been
" conceded only to few, and to those few the
" opportunity of exercising it cannot often
" occur in the course of life, it seems to me,
" that considering our imperfect nature, those
" occupations may be esteemed the best in
" which there is the least to reprove.—If the
" reasons I have before given," he afterwards adds, " be thought insufficient for my exculpa-
" tion, I have only to confide in the kindness of
" my readers. Persecuted as I have been from
" my youth, some indulgence may perhaps be
" allowed me for having sought consolation in
" these pursuits." In the sequel of his commentary he has thought it necessary to touch more fully on the peculiarity of his situation. " It was my intention," says he, " in my expo-
" sition of this sonnet°, to have related the
" persecutions which I have undergone; but an
" apprehension that I may be thought arrogant
" and ostentatious, induces me to pass slightly
" over them. In relating our own transactions
" it is not indeed easy to avoid these imputations.
" When the navigator informs us of the perils
" which

° " *Se tra gli altri sospir eh' escon di fore.*"

CHAP. V.

" which his ship has escaped, he means rather
" to give us an idea of his own exertions and
" prudence, than of the obligations which he
" owes to his good fortune, and perhaps en-
" hances the danger beyond the fact, in order
" to increase our admiration. In the same
" manner physicians frequently represent the
" state of their patient as more dangerous than
" it is in reality, so that if he happen to die, the
" cause may be supposed to be in the disorder,
" and not in their want of skill; and if he
" recover, the greater is the merit of the cure.
" I shall therefore only say, that my sufferings
" have been very severe, the authors of them
" having been men of great authority and talents,
" and fully determined to accomplish, by every
" means in their power, my total ruin. Whilst
" I, on the other hand, having nothing to
" oppose to these formidable enemies, but youth
" and inexperience, saving indeed the assist-
" ance which I derived from divine goodness,
" was reduced to such an extreme of misfortune,
" that I had at the same time to labour under
" the excommunication of my soul, and the
" dispersion of my property, to contend with
" endeavours to devest me of my authority in
" the state, and to introduce discord into my
" family, and with frequent attempts to deprive
" me of my life, insomuch that I should have
" thought

" thought death itself a much less evil than those " with which I had to combat. In this unfortunate situation it is surely not to be wondered " at, if I endeavoured to alleviate my anxiety " by turning to more agreeable subjects of " meditation, and in celebrating the charms of " my mistress sought a temporary refuge from " my cares."

Rise of Italian literature in the fourteenth century.

In taking a retrospect of the state of letters in Italy, it is impossible not to be struck with the great superiority which that country possessed over the rest of Europe. " To the Com- " media of Dante, the sonnets of Petrarca, and " the Decamerone of Boccaccio, three little " books written for the purposes of satire, of " gallantry and of feminine amusement, we " are to trace the origin of learning and true " taste in modern times[p]." Whether Dante was stimulated to his singular work by the success of his immediate predecessors, the provençal poets, or by the example of the ancient Roman authors, has been doubted. The latter opinion seems, however, to be the more probable. In his Inferno he had apparently the descent of Eneas in view. " Virgil is the guide of Dante " through

[p] *Andres, Dell' Origine progressi e stato attuale d' ogni letteratura, v.* i. *p.* 339.

CHAP. V. "through these regions of horrour[q]." In the rest of his poem there is little resemblance to any antecedent production. Compared with the Eneid, it is a piece of grand Gothick architecture at the side of a beautiful Roman temple. Dante was immediately succeeded by Boccaccio and by Petrarca, not as imitators, but as originals in the different branches to which their talents led them. Though they followed Dante, they did not employ themselves in cultivating the ground which he had broken up, but chose each for himself a new and an untried field, and reaped a harvest not less abundant. The

[q] Landino considered Dante as a close imitator of Virgil. "Nonne è nostris Danthem, virum omni doc-
"trina excultum, gravissimum auctorem habemus?
"qui ejus itineris quo mundum omnem ab imis tartaris
"ad supremum usque cœlum peragrat, in eo sibi illum
"(Virgilium) ducem fingit. In quo summum hominis
"bonum perquirens, miro quodam ingenio unicam
"Æneida imitandam proponit; ut cum pauca omnino
"inde excerpere videatur, nunquam tamen, si diligen-
"tius inspiciemus, ab ea discedat." *Land. Disput. Camal. lib.* 4. *Ed.* 1508. Even the form of his hell and his purgatory, the first of which resembled the cavity of an inverted cone, the other the exterior of an erect one, may perhaps be traced to the following passage:

"——— Tum Tartarus ipse
"Bis patet in præceps tantum, tenditque sub umbras,
"Quantus ad ætherium cœli suspectus olympum."

Æn. lib. vi.

The merits of these writers have been frequently recognised and appreciated, but perhaps by no one with more accuracy than by Lorenzo himself. In attempting to shew the importance and dignity of the Italian tongue, he justly remarks, that the proofs of its excellence are to be sought for in the writings of the three authors before mentioned; "who," says he, "have fully "shewn with what facility this language may be "adapted to the expression of every sentiment." He then proceeds as follows[r]. "If we look "into the Commedia of Dante, we shall find "theological and natural subjects treated with "the greatest ease and address. We shall there "discover those three species of composition so "highly commended in oratory, the simple, the "middle style, and the sublime; and shall find "in perfection, in this single author, those "excellencies which are dispersed amongst the "ancient Greek and Roman writers. Who "can deny that the subject of love has been "treated by Petrarca with more consistency and "elegance than by Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, "Propertius, or any other of the Latin poets? "The prose compositions of the learned and "eloquent

[r] *Com. di Lorenzo sopra alcuni de' suoi sonetti. ap. Ald.* 1554.

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" eloquent Boccaccio may be considered as unri-
" valled, not only on account of the invention
" which they display, but for the copiousness
" and elegance of the style. If on perusing the
" Decamerone we attend to the diversity of the
" subjects, sometimes serious or tragical, at
" others conversant with common life, and at
" others humorous or ridiculous; exhibiting
" all the perturbations incident to mankind, of
" affection and of aversion, of hope, and of
" fear; if we consider the great variety of the
" narrative, and the invention of circumstances
" which display all the peculiarities of our nature,
" and all the effects of our passions, we may
" undoubtedly be allowed to determine, that no
" language is better adapted to the purposes of
" expression than our own."

Its subsequent degradation.

But although the career of these first reformers of Italian literature was wonderfully rapid, the disciples they formed were few, and of those none maintained the reputation of their masters. Petrarca died in 1374, and Boccaccio in the year following. The clouds that had been awhile dispersed by the lustre of their abilities, again collected, and involved the world in their gloom. A full century elapsed without producing any literary work that can be ranked with the compositions of those great men.

men[s]. The attempt of Piero de' Medici, in the year 1441, to create a spirit of poetical emulation in Florence, while it serves as a proof of his munificence, sufficiently indicates the low degree of estimation in which this study was then held, and the insignificance of its professors. If philosophy in the fourteenth century went poor and naked, in the next she had changed her destiny with her sister poetry[t]. The state of prose composition was equally wretched. No longer the vehicle of elegant or learned sentiment, the Italian language was consigned over to the use of the vulgar, corrupted by neglect, and debased by the mixture of provincial dialects. It was only on the most common occasions, or in the freedom of epistolary intercourse, that men of

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[s] The *Bella Mano* of Giusto da Conti, a Roman civilian by profession, but a poet by inclination, who wrote in the beginning of the fifteenth century, may perhaps be exempted from this general censure. It consists of a series of sonnets in praise of the author's mistress, some of which may contend, in point of elegance, with those of Petrarca, on the model of which they are professedly written. "Benchè pur," says Tiraboschi, not without some reason, "vi abbia molto di stentato e di languido." *Storia della Lett. Ital. v.* vi. *parte* ii. *p.* 146.

[t] *Povera e nuda vai Filosofia.* PETR.

CHAP. V. of learning condescended to employ their native tongue; and even then it appears to have been considered as inadequate to the purpose, and the assistance of the Latin language was often resorted to, and intermixed with it, in order to render it intelligible[u].

The

[u] Some authors, who have taken too general and indistinct a view of this subject, would induce us to believe, that a continual improvement in Italian literature took place from the time of Petrarca, till it arrived at its summit in the sixteenth century; and have had influence enough to establish this as a popular opinion; but to say nothing of the evidence of the best Italian criticks, by whom this singular degradation of their language is fully attested, it is yet capable of being ascertained by an appeal to facts. If the rise of literature had been gradual during this period, some memorials of it must have remained; but from the death of Petrarca to the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, Italy did not produce a single specimen of this boasted improvement; whilst, on the other hand, innumerable instances remain, both in verse and prose, of the barbarous and degraded style then in use. Even the celebrity of Cosmo de' Medici, the great patron of letters, never gave rise to a panegyrick in his native tongue that has any pretensions to the approbation of the present time, although there yet remain among the manuscripts of the Laurentian library, innumerable pieces in his praise, of which the two sonnets given in the Appendix (No. XXXIII.) are a fair, and perhaps will be thought a sufficient specimen. Voltaire indeed informs us, "that there was an uninterrupted "succession of Italian poets, who are all known to pos-"terity;

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The only symptoms of improvement which had appeared in Italy, at the time that Lorenzo de' Medici first began to distinguish himself by his writings, are to be found in the productions of Burchiello, or in those of the three brothers of the family of Pulci, to some of which we have before adverted. Burchiello, who flourished about the middle of the fifteenth century, and who exercised in Florence a profession, in which, as he informs us,

Revivers of it in the fifteenth century.

Burchiello.

"*The muses with the razor were at strife*[x],"

has left a great number of sonnets, which exhibit no inconsiderable share of wit and vivacity,

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"terity; that Pulci wrote after Petrarca; that Bojardo "succeeded Pulci; whilst in the fertility of his imagination, Ariosto surpassed them all." *Essai sur les mœurs, &c. v.* ii. *p.* 163. Pulci, it is true, is the next author of popular estimation that followed Petrarca; but the period between them is precisely the time in question. The *Morgante* was not written till upwards of a century after the death of Petrarca. The errours into which many writers on this subject have fallen, have been occasioned by a want of discrimination between the progress of Italian and of classical literature; a distinction which I shall hereafter have occasion to develop more at large.

[x] "*La Poesia combatte col rasoio.*" BURCH.

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city, and occasionally display a felicity of expression, that might have done honour to better subjects than those which generally employed his pen, but it is to be regretted that the excellencies of these pieces are too often lost in their obscurity, and that, although we may at times perceive the vivid sallies of imagination, it is only as we see coruscations from a cloud by night, which leave us again in total darkness. This obscurity has been the cause of great regret to his admirers, several of whom have undertaken to comment upon and illustrate his works. Crescimbeni is of opinion, that these extravagant productions were intended to satirize the absurdities of his poetical contemporaries, and the folly of their admirers; but satire, too obscure to be generally understood, is not likely to effect a reformation[y].

The

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[y] The sonnets of Burchiello were several times printed in the fifteenth century, generally without date. The earliest edition is supposed to be that of Bologna, 1475. In the following century they were commented by Anton Francesco Doni, and published at Venice, 1553: but the commentator stands no less in need of an interpreter than the author. This edition is inscribed by the editor to the celebrated artists Tintoretto and Romanelli, and is printed by Francesco Marcolini, in a singular but not inelegant type

CHAP. V.

The Pulci were of a noble family of Florence, but seem to have declined any participation in the offices of the republick, for the purpose of devoting themselves to their favourite studies. That a close intimacy subsisted between them and the Medici is apparent from many of the works of these brothers, some of which are inscribed to their great patrons, and others entirely devoted to their praise. The earliest production of any of this family is probably the elegy by Bernardo, to the memory of Cosmo de' Medici, which he has addressed to Lorenzo. To his elegy on the death of the beautiful Simonetta, we have before assigned its proper date. He afterwards translated the Eclogues of Virgil, which

The three brothers of the Pulci.

Writings of Bernardo Pulci.

type. Besides his sonnets, Burchiello is also the author of a satire in *terza rima*, in which he has attempted to imitate the manner of Dante. The objects of his animadversion are the practitioners of what are called the liberal professions in Florence, amongst whom the physicians have their full share of ridicule. Of this poem, which has not been printed, a copy is preserved in the Gaddi library, now incorporated with that of the great duke of Florence. (*Band. Cat. vol.* v. *Plut.* xliv. *cod.* 30.) Another transcript of the fifteenth century is in my possession, from which I shall give a short extract in the Appendix; whence the reader may be further enabled to judge of the state of Italian literature immediately previous to the time of Lorenzo de' Medici.

Appx. No. XXXIV.

CHAP. V. which he also inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici[z]. Bernardo is likewise the author of a poem on the passion of Christ, which is by no means devoid of poetical merit. It is preceded by a dedication

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[z] This was the first attempt to translate the Eclogues of Virgil into the Italian language. From the dedication of these pieces, it is not difficult to determine that they were translated about the year 1470, as the author adverts to the recent death of Piero de' Medici, and at the same time mentions his translation as having been commenced in the year preceding his address to Lorenzo; that they are not to be referred to a much later period, is evident from his congratulating Lorenzo on his knowledge of the Latin tongue, which he asserts is far beyond his years. These translations were first published in 1481, and again at Florence in 1494. Tiraboschi is mistaken in supposing that the Eclogues of Bernardo, and his version of the Bucolicks are different works. (*Storia della Let. Ital. v.* vi. *parte* ii. *p.* 174.) In both these editions, the works of Bernardo are united with those of other writers, although in the latter some additional pieces are included. The title of this edition is as follows: BUCOLICHE ELEGANTISSIMAMENTE COMPOSTE DA BERNARDO PULCI FIORENTINO. ET DA FRANCESCO DE ARSOCHI SENESE ET DA HIERONYMO BENIVIENI FIORENTINO ET DA JACOPO FIORINO DE BONINSEGNI SENESE. At the close we read—*Finite sono le quattro Boccoliche sopra decte con una elegia della morte di Cosimo. Et un altra elegia della morte della diva Simoneta. Et un altra elegia di nuovo adgiunta. Impresse in Firenze per maestro* ANTONIO MISCHOMINI ANNO MCCCCLXXXXIIII *a dì* XVIII *del mese Aprile.*

dedication to a pious nun; from which it appears that the good sister had not only prescribed this subject to the poet, but that by her pressing instances he had been induced to complete the work, which he affirms had cost him many a tear[a]. In the Laurentian library some other poems of this author are yet preserved, that have not hitherto been published[b]. CHAP. V.

Of Luca Pulci, whose verses on the tournament of Lorenzo have before been noticed, we have two other poems. The first of these, entitled Luca Pulci.

[a] This poem was published at Florence *per Franc. Bonacursio, die* 3 *Novembris, anno* 1490, in 4to. (*Haym. Bibl. Ital. p.* 95.) But I conceive that the edition also printed at Florence without note of the year, or name of the printer, and having at the close only the mark *Florentiæ impressum*, is of earlier date. The lady to whom it is inscribed is *Annalena de' Tanini nel monasterio delle murate*, who was probably sister of the author's wife, as it appears that he married a lady of the family of Tanini, who, as well as her husband, was distinguished by her talents for poetry.

[b] From these I shall give two sonnets addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, which are followed by thirty-eight others, all on the exhaustless subject of love. At what time they were written is uncertain; but from their being addressed to Lorenzo, we may conjecture that he was then of manly age, before which time he had given some specimens of his own poetical talents. *Appx. No.* XXXV.

CHAP. V. entitled *Il Ciriffo Calvaneo*, is an epick romance, and was probably the first that appeared in Italy; it being certainly produced some years prior to the *Morgante* of Luigi Pulci, and to the *Orlando Innamorato* of Bojardo, two pieces which have generally been considered as the first examples of this species of poetry. In relating the wars between the Christians and the Infidels, the author seems to have prepared the way for the more celebrated works on the same subject which soon afterwards followed[c]. This poem was

[c] *Il Ciriffo Calvaneo*, and his companion *Il Povero Avveduto*, the heroes of the poem, are the illicit offspring of two unfortunate ladies, who, being abandoned by their lovers, are indebted to the shepherd *Lecore* for their preservation. As the young men grew up, they displayed their courage in pursuing wild beasts, and their generosity in giving away the old shepherd's cattle and effects; in consequence of which he breaks his heart. *Massima*, the mother of Il Ciriffo, then informs them of the nobility of their origin, and of the distress which she has herself suffered; in consequence of which her son piously swears to accomplish the death of his father, which vow he accordingly fulfils. Repenting of his crime he hastens to Rome, obtains Christian baptism and the remission of his sins. In the mean time Il Povero Avveduto is carried off by Epidoniffo, a pirate of Marseilles, who stood in fear neither of God nor his saints.

" Egli harebbe rubata quella nave
" Dove Christo a San Pier venne in ajuto;
" E se

was left unfinished by the author, but, at the instance of Lorenzo de' Medici, was, after the death of Luca, completed by Bernardo Giambullari[d]. The *Driadeo d' amore* is a pastoral romance

CHAP. V.

" E se vi fusser stato su, le chiave
" Tolte, e poi l'oro e l'argento fonduto ;
" E preso in terra l'angel che disse ave,
" Menato a fusta, e ne' ferri tenuto,
" E spogliato Gioseppe vecchiarello,
" Ma col baston prima scosso il mantello."

After many adventures, Il Povero Avveduto goes to the assistance of Tebaldo, sultan of Egypt, who was besieged by Luigi, king of France. The combatants on each side are particularly described. A battle takes place, after which Il Povero is made a cavalier by the sultan, for whose particular amusement he tilts with his newly-discovered brother Lionetto. Such is the heterogeneous mixture which composes this poem ; the invention of which is not, however, to be wholly attributed to Luca. In the Gaddi library is a MS. anteriour to his time by 150 years, entitled, by Bandini, " *Liber pauperis* " *prudentis.*" (*Cat. Bibl. Laur. vol.* v. *Plut.* xliv. *cod.* 30.) From which it sufficiently appears, that, in this instance, Luca is only an imitator. It is to be regretted that his judgment did not lead him to select a better model.

[d] It was printed, with the continuation of Giambullari, at Florence in 1535 ; and had probably been printed before, as it is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, the grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who died in the year 1519. It there consists of four books, of which the first

CHAP. V. romance in *ottava rima*, and is dedicated by the author to Lorenzo de' Medici, for whose particular amusement he professes to have written it[e]. The heroick epistles of Luca Pulci do credit to their author. These epistles are eighteen in number, and are composed in *terza rima*. The first is from Lucretia to Lauro; that is, from the accomplished Lucretia Donati to Lorenzo de' Medici. The others are founded on different incidents in the ancient Greek and Roman history[f].

Luigi

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first only is the work of Pulci. The Ciriffo Calvaneo was reprinted with the Giostra of Lorenzo, and other works of Luca, by the *Giunti* at Florence, in 1572 : but the continuation by Giambullari is there omitted.

[e] Printed at Florence in 1479. (*De Bure Bibliogr. Instruc. No.* 3411.) I have seen two other ancient editions of this poem, without date; at the close of one of which we read *Finito il Driadeo per Luca Pulci ad Petitione di ser Piero Pacini.* Haym erroneously attributes this poem to Luigi Pulci, and I conceive he is also mistaken in citing an edition of 1489. *Bibl. Ital. p.* 91.

[f] These epistles have been several times printed. Tiraboschi refers to an edition of 1481, and I have met with three others : the first, *Impresso in Firenze per ser Francesco Bonacorsi et per Antonio di Francesco Venetiano nell' anno* MCCCCLXXXVIII, *a dì* XXVIII *di Febraio;* the second at Florence in 1513 : and the last in 1572.

CHAP. V.

Luigi Pulci.

Luigi Pulci, the youngest of these brothers, was born on the third day of December 1431, and appears, from many circumstances, to have lived on terms of the utmost friendship with Lorenzo de' Medici, who in one of his poems mentions him with great freedom and jocularity[g]. The principal work of this author is the *Morgante maggiore*, a poem which has given rise to various opinions and conjectures, as to its tendency and its merits. Whether this poem, or the Orlando Innamorato of the count Bojardo, was first written, has been a matter of doubt; certain it is, that in publication the *Morgante* had the priority, having been printed at Venice in 1488, after a Florentine edition of uncertain date, whilst the Orlando Innamorato did not appear till the year 1496[h]. Accordingly the Morgante

[g] In his poem on hawking, entitled *La Caccia col Falcone*, first published at the close of the present work.

[h] It is evident, from the following lines at the conclusion of the poem of Bojardo, that it was not finished when the French made an irruption into Italy, in the year 1494:

"Mentre ch'io canto, Ahime Dio redentore,
"Veggio l' Italia tutta a fiamma e a fuoco
"Per questi Galli, che con gran furore
"Vengon per rovinar non so che luoco."

Bojardo Orl. Innam. lib. 3. *Canto* 9. *Ed. Ven.* 1548.

CHAP. V. Morgante is generally regarded as the prototype of the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. It has been said that Ficino and Politiano had each a share in the composition of this work; but the poetry of Politiano is of a very different character, and there is no instance on record that Ficino ever attempted poetical composition[i]. The same degree of credit is due to the opinion, that Luigi Pulci was accustomed to recite his poem at the table of Lorenzo de' Medici, about the year 1450[k]; for it must be remembered that Lorenzo de'

[i] Limerno Pitocco (*Teofilo Folengi*) in his extravagant and licentious poem of *Orlandino*, ridicules the idea of Politiano being the author of the Morgante.

" Politian fu quello ch' altamente
" Cantò del gran gigante dal bataio:
" Et a Luigi Pulci suo cliente
" L'honor diè senza scritto di notajo.
" Pur dopo si pentì; ma chi si pente
" Po'l fatto, pesta l' acqua nel mortajo.
" Sia o non sia pur cotesto vero,
" So ben, chi credde troppo, ha del liggero."
Orlandino, *Cap.* i. *Ed. Ven.* 1550.

[k] *Dr. Burney's History of Musick*, *v.* iv. *p.* 14. For this the learned and ingenious author has cited the authority of Crescimbeni, (*vol.* ii. *part* ii. *p.* 273. *Ed. Ven.* 1730,) who informs us, as is probably the truth, that Pulci was accustomed to recite his poem in the manner of ancient rhapsodists, at the table of Lorenzo de' Medici, but does not

de' Medici was only born in 1448. It may further be observed, that although the Morgante was written at the particular request of Lucretia, the mother of Lorenzo, it was not finished till after her death, which did not happen till the year 1482[l]. This singular offspring of the wayward genius of Pulci has been as immoderately commended by its admirers, as it has been unreasonably degraded and condemned by its opponents; and whilst some have not scrupled to give it the precedence, in point of poetical merit, to the productions of Ariosto and of Tasso, others have decried it as vulgar, absurd, and profane; and the censures of the church have been promulged in confirmation of the latter part of the sentence[m]. From the

not fix this event at any particular period, though he afterwards informs us, that Luigi flourished about the year 1450.

[l] *Morgant. Magg. Cant.* xxviii. *Stan.* 124. *Ed.* 1546.

[m] Folengi, however, ranks the poem of Pulci as canonical, with those of Bojardo, Ariosto, Francesco Cieco, and himself; and freely condemns those of the other romancers to the flames, as apocryphal.

—— "Trabisonda, Ancroia, Spagna, e Bovo,
"Con l'altro resto al foco sian donate:
"Apocrife

CHAP. V.

the solemnity and devotion with which every canto is introduced, some have judged that the author meant to give a serious narrative; but the improbability of the relation, and the burlesque nature of the incidents, destroy all ideas of this kind. By others, this author has been accused of a total want of elegance in his expressions, and of harmony in his verse; but this work yet ranks as classical in Italian literature, and, if it be not poetry of the highest relish, has a flavour that is yet perceptible[n].

The

" Apocrife son tutte; e le riprovo
" Come nemighe d'ogni veritate.
" Bojardo, l'Ariosto, Pulci, e'l Cieco,
" Autenticati sono, ed io con seco."

Orlandino, cap. i.

[n] A very judicious French critick has given the following just and accurate character of this work: " C'est un " poeme en Rime octave, de 28 chants, d'un goût ori- " ginal. L'auteur s'y est mis au dessus des régles, non " pas de dessein, comme Vincent Gravina lui a fait " l'honneur de le croire, mais parcequ'il les a entiére- " ment ignorées. Fort en repos du jugement des cri- " tiques, il a confondu les lieux et les tems, allié le " comique aux serieux, fait mourir burlesquement de " la morsure d'un cancre marin au talon, le géant son " héros, et cela dès le 20 livre, en sorte qu'il n'en est " plus parlé dans les huit suivans. La naiveté de sa " narration a couvert tous ces defauts. Les amateurs " de la diction Florentine font encore audjourd'hui leurs " delices

The sonnets of Luigi Pulci, printed with those of Matteo Franco, have the same capricious character as his other writings; and bear a resemblance to those of his predecessor Burchiello. Franco, the poetick correspondent of Pulci, was a canon of Florence, and was by no means inferiour to him in pungency and humour. It is to be regretted that these authors so far exceeded at times the bounds of civility and decorum, that it is scarcely possible to suggest an expression of reproach and resentment which is not to be found in their writings. The family name of Pulci (*Pulex*) affords an ample subject for the satirical powers of Franco°. His person is

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" delices de la lecture de Morgante, sur tout quand ils " en peuvent rencontrer un exemplaire de l'edition de " Venice 1546, ou 1550, accompagnée des explications de " Jean Pulci neveu de l' auteur." *M. de la Monnoye. v. Baillet Jugem. des Scav. v.* iv. *p.* 30. I must, however, add, that these explications amount to nothing more than a glossary of a very few words, placed at the end of each canto.

° A che credi ch'io pensi, o ch'io balocchi
Tanti de' Pulci le persone stolte?
Perchè de' Pulci hai sol tre cose tolte,
Leggerezza, colore, e piccini occhi,
Ma il nome tuo è Gigi de' Pidocchi, &c.

Son. ix.

CHAP. V. is a theme equally fertile. Famine, says his antagonist, was as naturally depicted in his countenance as if it had been the work of Giotto[p]. He had made an eight days' truce with death, which was on the point of expiring, when he would be swept away to *Giudecca*, (the lowest pit of Dante,) where his brother Luca was gone before to prepare him a place[q]. Luigi supports this opprobrious contest by telling his adversary that he was marked at his birth with the sign of the halter, instead of that of the cross, and by a thousand other imputations, of which decency forbids a repetition[r]. We are, however, informed by the editor of the ancient edition of these poems, that although, for the amusement of their readers, these authors so lavishly abused and

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[p] E già la fame in fronte al naturale
Porti dipinta, e pare opra di Giotto.
Son. xxxvii.

[q] Tenuto hai con la morte,
Otto dì triegua; hor che sofferto ha troppo,
Con la falce fienaja vien di galoppa.
Tu n' andrai a piè zoppo,
A trovar Luca tuo, ladro di zecca,
Che per te serba un luogo alla Judecca.
Son. xxxvii.

[r] Tu nascesti col segno del capresto,
Come in Francia si dice della croce.
Son. xxx.

and satirized each other, they continued in reality intimate friends[s]; and this information is rendered highly probable, by their having equally shared the favour of Lorenzo de' Medici, whose authority would have suppressed the first indications of real dissension. The freedoms in which they indulged themselves, called, however, for the interference of the inquisition; and a prohibition was issued against the further circulation of this work[t]. But although

[s] Et benchè M. Matteo & Luigi in questi loro sonetti dimonstrino esser poco amici l'uno dell' altro, niente di manco nel secreto erono amicissimi. Ma per dare piacere & dilectare altri, alcuna volta si mordevano & svillaneggiavono in tal modo come se proprio stati fussono nimici capitali.

[t] I have seen an edition of these poems, without note of date or place, but apparently printed about the close of the fifteenth century, and entitled, "SONETTI DI "MISSERE MATTHEO FRANCO ET DI LUIGI PULCI "JOCOSI ET FACETI CIOE DA RIDERE." Many of these sonnets are addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, for whose favour the rival poets seem to have contended, by endeavouring to surpass each other in eccentricity and scurrility. A new edition was published in the year 1759, by the marchese Filippo de' Rossi, who informs us, that they were three times printed in the fifteenth century; to which he adds, "Il S. S. tribunale dell' "inquisizione gli fulminò una giustissima proibizione, "che

CHAP. V. although the productions of the before-mentioned authors display some share of vivacity and imagin-

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"che avendone sempre meritamente impedita la ri-
"stampa, ha talmente resi rari questi sonetti, che da
"ogn' uno oramai si cercano invano." If my readers be curious to know the style of these formidable compositions, which excited the vigilance of the holy tribunal, they may take as a specimen the following sonetto of Luigi Pulci:

LUIGI PULCI A UN SUO AMICO PER RIDERE.

Costor, che fan sì gran disputazione
Dell' anima, ond' ell' entri, o ond' ell' esca,
O come il nocciol si stia nella pesca,
Hanno studiato in su n' un gran mellone.
Aristotile allegano, e Platone,
E voglion ch' ella in pace requiesca
Fra suoni, e canti, e fannoti una tresca,
Che t' empie il capo di confusione.
L' Anima è sol come si vede espresso
In un pan bianco caldo un pinnocchiato,
O una carbonata in un pan fesso.
E chi crede altro ha il fodero in bucato,
E que' che per l'un cento hanno promesso
Ci pagheran di succiole in mercato.
Mi dice un che v' è stato
Nell' altra vita, e più non può tornarvi
Che appena con la scala si può andarvi.
Costor credon trovarvi
E' beccafichi, e gli ortolan pelati,
E' buon vin dolci, e letti spiumacciati,
E vanno drieto a' Frati.
Noi ce n' andrem, Pandolfo, in val di buja,
Senza sentir più cantare: Alleluja.

imagination, and exhibit at times a natural and easy vein of poetry; yet upon the whole they are strongly tinctured with the rusticity of the age in which they were produced. CHAP. V.

That Lorenzo de' Medici had begun to exercise his talents for poetry at a very early age, there remains decisive proof. We have before adverted to his interview with Federigo of Naples, at Pisa, in the year 1465. On this occasion he was requested by that prince to point out to him such pieces of Italian poetry as were most deserving of his attention. Lorenzo willingly complied with his request; and shortly afterwards selected a small volume, at the close of which he added some of his own sonnets and canzoni, addressing them to Federigo in a few prefatory lines, as a testimony of his affection and regard[a]. Hence it appears, that at the age Early productions of Lorenzo.

[a] This singular circumstance, which so decisively ascertains the early period at which Lorenzo began to exercise his poetical talents, was first discovered by Apostolo Zeno, who having, in the year 1742, found in the possession of his friend Jacopo Facciolati, at Padua, a manuscript collection of ancient Italian poems, was, after mature deliberation, induced to conjecture that they were collected and arranged by Lorenzo de' Medici. To this supposition he was principally

CHAP. V.

age of seventeen, Lorenzo had attempted different kinds of composition, which may be considered not only as anteriour to the celebrated poem of Politiano, on the *Giostra* of Giuliano, which we have before noticed, but probably to any of the writings of the Pulci. But, however the Pulci may contend with Lorenzo in priority, they fall greatly short of him in all the essential requisites of a poet; and whilst their produc-

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cipally led by the introductory address to Federigo of Arragon, in which the compiler adverts to the visit of Federigo to Pisa, in the preceding year, and afterwards addresses that prince in the following terms: *At the close of the book, (conceiving that it might afford you some satisfaction,) I have inserted a few of* MY OWN SONNETS AND CANZONI, *with the expectation, that when you peruse them they may recall to your remembrance the fidelity and attachment of their author.* On comparing the productions of the anonymous compiler, with the *Poesie Volgari* of Lorenzo, printed by Aldo, in 1554, the conjectures of the critick were amply confirmed; he having there discovered almost every poem which appeared in the manuscript, except five pieces, which he conceived might probably be inserted in the *Canzone a ballo* of Lorenzo and Politiano, but which in fact he could not then ascertain for want of that work. I shall give the letter of Zeno on this subject, in the Appendix, No. XXXVI. I must, however, observe, that the visit of Federigo to Pisa was not in 1464, as mentioned by Zeno, who has too hastily quoted Ammirato (*v.* iii. *fl.* 93.), but in 1465, as will appear by a reference to the before-cited passage of the Florentine historian.

productions bear the uniform character of a rude and uncultivated age, those of Lorenzo de' Medici are distinguished by a vigour of imagination, an accuracy of judgment, and an elegance of style, which afforded the first great example of improvement, and entitle him, almost exclusively, to the honourable appellation of the restorer of Italian literature. Within the course of a few years Politiano, Benivieni, and others, imbibed the true spirit of poetry, and Florence had once more the credit of rekindling that spark which was soon to diffuse a lustre through the remotest parts of Europe.

Inquiry into his merits as a poet.

If, in order to justify the pretensions of Lorenzo to the rank here assigned him, it were sufficient merely to adduce the authority of succeeding criticks, this would be productive of little difficulty. But to found our opinion of an author whose works are yet open to examination, on that of others, however it may sooth our indolence, or gratify our curiosity, cannot inform our judgment. It is from the writings which yet remain of Lorenzo de' Medici that we are to acquire a just idea of his general character as a poet, and to determine how far they have been instrumental in effecting a reformation in the taste of his countrymen, or in opening the way to subsequent improvements.

The

CHAP. V.

Object and characteristicks of poetry.

The great end and object of poetry, and consequently the proper aim of the poet, is to communicate to us a clear and perfect idea of his proposed subject. What the painter exhibits to us by variety of colour, by light and shade, the poet expresses in appropriate language. The former seizes merely the external form, and that only in a given attitude; the other surrounds his object, pierces it, and discloses its most hidden qualities. With the former it is inert and motionless; with the latter it lives and moves, it is expanded or compressed, it glares upon the imagination, or vanishes in air, and is as various as nature herself.

Description.

The simple description of natural objects is perhaps to a young mind the most delightful species of poetry, and was probably the first employment of the poet. It may be compared to melody in musick, which is relished even by the most uncultivated ear. In this department, Virgil is an exquisite master[v]. Still more lively are the conceptions of Dante, still more precise the language in which they are expressed. As we

[v] How grateful to our sensations, how distinct to our imaginations, appear the

"Speluncæ, vivique lacus, ac frigida Tempe,
"Mugitusque boûm, mollesque sub arbore somni."

we follow him, his wildest excursions take the appearance of reality. Compared with his vivid hues, how faint, how delicate, is the colouring of Petrarca! yet the harmony of the tints almost compensates for their want of force. With accurate descriptions of the face of nature the works of Lorenzo abound; and these are often heightened by those minute but striking characteristicks, which, though open to all observers, the eye of the poet can alone select. Thus the description of an Italian winter, with which he opens his poem of *Ambra*[w], is marked by several appropriate and striking images.

Talents of Lorenzo for description.

The foliage of the olive appears of a dark green, but is nearly white beneath.

L'uliva, in qualche dolce piaggia aprica,
Secondo il vento par, or verde, or bianca.

On some sweet sunny slope the olive grows,
Its hues still changing as the zephyr blows.

The flight of the cranes, though frequently noticed in poetry, was perhaps never described in

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[w] Published for the first time at the close of the present work.

CHAP. V. in language more picturesque than the following, from the same poem:

Stridendo in ciel, i gru veggonsi a lunge
L'aere stampar di varie e belle forme;
E l' ultima col collo steso aggiunge
Ov' è quella dinanzi alle vane orme.

Marking the tracts of air, the clamorous cranes
Wheel their due flight, in varied lines descried;
And each with out-stretched neck his rank maintains,
In marshall'd order through th' ethereal void.

The following picture from his *Selve d'amore* is also drawn with great truth and simplicity:

Al dolce tempo il bon pastore informa
Lasciar le mandre, ove nel verno giacque:
E 'l lieto gregge, che ballando in torma,
Torna all 'alte montagne, alle fresche acque,
L' agnel, trottando pur la materna orma
Segue; ed alcun, che pur or ora nacque,
L' amorevol pastore in braccio porta:
Il fido cane a tutti fa la scorta.

Sweet spring returns; the shepherd from the fold
Brings forth his flock, nor dreads the wintry cold;
Delighted once again their steps to lead
To the green hill, clear spring, and flowery mead.

True

True to their mother's track, the sportive young
Trip light. The careful hind slow moves along,
Pleased in his arms the new-dropt lamb to bear;
His dog, a faithful guard, brings up the rear.

In the same poem is a description of the golden age, in which the author seems to have exerted all his powers, in selecting such images as are supposed to have been peculiar to that happy state of life.

Poetick comparison.

But the description of natural objects awakes in the poet's mind corresponding emotions; as his heart warms his fancy expands, and he labours to convey a more distinct or a more elevated idea of the impressions of his own imagination. Hence the origin of figures, or figurative language; in the use of which he aims at describing his principal subject, by the qualities of some other object more generally known, or more striking in its nature. These figures of poetry have furnished the philologists of ancient and modern times with a great variety of minute distinctions, but many of them consist rather in form than in substance; comparison, express or implied, will be found to be the essence of them all.

CHAP. V.

Instances from the writings of Lorenzo.

In the employment of comparative illustration, Lorenzo de' Medici is often particularly happy. An attentive observer of the works of nature, as well in her general appearances, as in her more minute operations, intimately acquainted with all the finer productions of art, and accustomed to the most abstruse speculations of philosophy, whatever occurred to his mind excited a profusion of relative ideas, either bearing a general resemblance to his immediate subject, or associated with it by some peculiar circumstance. The first of these he often employed for the purpose of explanation or of ornament in his more serious compositions, the latter with great wit and vivacity in his lighter productions. At some times one external object, or one corporal action, is elucidated by another; at other times natural phenomena are personified, and illustrated by sensible images; and instances occur where abstract ideas and metaphysical sentiments are brought before the mind, by a comparison with the objects of the material world. Of the simplest mode of comparison the following is no inelegant instance:

Quando sopra i nevosi ed alti monti,
Apollo spande il suo bel lume adorno,
Tal i crin suoi sopra la bianca gonna.

Son. lxxiii.

O'er

——O'er her white dress her shining tresses flow'd;
Thus on the mountain heights with snows o'erspread,
The beams of noon their golden lustre shed.

In his pastoral of Corydon, the shepherd thus addresses his scornful mistress, elucidating one action by another:

Lasso quanto dolor io aggio avuto,
Quando fuggi da gli occhi col pie scalzo;
Et con quanti sospir ho già temuto
Che spine, o fere venenose, o il balzo
Non offenda i tuoi piedi; io mi ritegno,
Per te fuggo i pie invano, e per te gli alzo:
Come chi drizza stral veloce al segno,
Poi che tratt' ha, torcendo il capo crede
Drizzarlo, egli è già fuor del curvo legno.

Ah nymph! what pangs are mine, when causeless fright
O'er hill, o'er valley, wings thy giddy flight,
Lest some sharp thorn thy heedless way may meet,
Some poisonous reptile wound thy naked feet.
Thy pains I feel, but deprecate in vain,
And turn, and raise my feet, in sympathetick pain.
So when the archer, with attentive glance,
Marks his fleet arrow wing its way askance,
He strives with tortuous act and head aside,
Right to the mark its devious course to guide.

The

CHAP. V. The following sonnet affords an instance, not only of the illustration of one sensible object by another, but of the comparison of an abstract sentiment, with a beautiful natural image :

SONETTO.

Oimè, che belle lagrime fur quelle
Che'l nembo di disio stillando mosse !
Quando il giusto dolor che'l cor percosse,
Salì poi su nell' amorose stelle !
Rigavon per la delicata pelle
Le bianche guancie dolcemente rosse,
Come chiar rio faria, che'n prato fosse,
Fior bianchi, e rossi, le lagrime belle ;
Lieto amor stava in l'amorosa pioggia,
Com' uccel dopo il sol, bramate tanto,
Lieto riceve rugiadose stille[x].

Poi

[x] Spenser has a similar passage in his *Mourning Muse of Thestylis:*

The blinded archer boy,
Like larke in showre of rain,
Sate bathing of his wings,
And glad the time did spend
Under those chrystall drops
Which fell from her faire eyes,
And at their brightest beams,
Him proyn'd in lovely wise.

Mr.

Poi piangendo in quelli occhi ov' egli alloggia,
Facea del bello e doloroso pianto,
Visibilmente uscir dolce faville.

Ah pearly drops, that pouring from those eyes,
Spoke the dissolving cloud of soft desire!
What time cold sorrow chill'd the genial fire,
"Struck the fair urns and bade the waters rise."
Soft down those cheeks, where native crimson vies
With ivory whiteness, see the crystals throng;
As some clear river winds its stream along,
Bathing the flowers of pale and purple dies.

Whilst

Mr. Wharton, in his observations on the Fairy Queen (*v.* i. *fi.* 223.) has traced this passage to Ariosto (*Canto* 11. *Stanza* 65.):

Così a le belle lagrime le piume,
Si bagna amore, e gode al chiaro lume.

Though he thinks Spenser's verses bear a stronger resemblance to those of Nic. Archias (or the count Nicolo d'Arco, a Latin poet of the 16th century):

Tum suavi in pluvia nitens Cupido,
Insidebat, uti solet volucris,
Ramo, vere novo, ad novos tepores
Post solem accipere aetheris liquores
Gestire et pluviæ ore blandiendo.

I have only to add, that as Lorenzo de' Medici is the earliest author who has availed himself of this beautiful idea, so his representation of it has not been surpassed by any of those who have since adopted it.

CHAP. V.

Whilst Love, rejoicing in the amorous shower,
Stands like some bird, that after sultry heats
Enjoys the drops, and shakes his glittering wings;
Then grasps his bolt, and, conscious of his power,
Midst those bright orbs assumes his wonted seat,
And thro' the lucid shower his living light'ning flings.

To examples of this kind I shall only add another, in which the poet has attempted to explain the mysterious intercourse of Platonick affection, by a familiar but fanciful comparison:

Delle caverne antiche
Trahe la fiamma del sol, fervente e chiara,
Le picciole formiche.
Sagace alcuna e sollecita impara,
E dice all' altre, ov' ha il parco villano
Ascoso astuto un monticel di grano;
Ond' esce fuor la nera turba avara;
Tutte di mano in mano
Vanno e vengon dal monte;
Porton la cara preda in bocca, e'n mano;
Vanno leggieri, e pronte,
E gravi e carche ritornon di fore.
Fermon la picciola orma
Scontrandosi in cammino; e mentre posa
L' una, quell' altra informa
Dell' alta preda; onde più disiosa
Alla dolce fatica ogn'or l'invita.
Calcata e spessa è la via lunga, e trita;
E se riporton ben tutte una cosa,
Più cara e più gradita

Sempre

Semprè e, quant 'esser deve
Cosa, senza la qual manca la vita.
Lo ingiusto fascio è lieve,
Se'l picciol animal senz 'esso more.
Così li pensier miei
Van più leggieri alla mia Donna bella;
Scontrando quei di lei
Fermonsi, e l'un con l'altro allor favella.
Dolce preda s'è ben quanto con loro,
Porton dal caro ed immortal tesoro.

Canz. xii.

As from their wint'ry cells,
The summer's genial warmth impels
The busy ants—a countless train,
That with sagacious sense explore,
Where provident for winter's store,
The careful rustick hides his treasur'd grain;
Then issues forth the sable band,
And seizing on the secret prize,
From mouth to mouth, from hand to hand,
His busy task each faithful insect plies,
And often as they meet,
With scanty interval of toil,
Their burthens they repose awhile,
For rest alternate renders labour sweet.
The travell'd path their lengthened tracks betray,
And if no varied cates they bear,
Yet ever is the portion dear,
Without whose aid the powers of life decay.

Thus

CHAP. V.

Thus from my faithful breast,
The busy messengers of love,
Incessant towards my fair one's bosom move;
But in their way some gentle thought
They meet with kind compassion fraught,
Soft breathing from that sacred shrine,
Where dwells a heart in unison with mine,
And in sweet interchange delight awhile to rest.

Personification of material objects.

But the poet does not confine himself to the lively description of nature, or of the corresponding emotions of his own mind. His next attempt is of a bolder kind, and the inanimate objects by which he is surrounded seem to possess life and motion, consciousness and reason, to act and to suffer. The mountains frown, the rivers murmur, the woods sigh, and the fable of Orpheus is revived. In the use of this figure, Petrarca is inexhaustible; and there are few rural objects that have not been called upon to share his emotions; the tenderness of the lover inspires the fancy of the poet, he addresses them as if they were conscious of his passion, and applauds or reproaches them as they are favourable or adverse to the promotion of it. The works of Lorenzo afford also frequent instances of the use of this figure, which more than any other gives action and spirit to poetry. In the following sonnet he not only animates the violets, but represents them

them as accounting, by a beautiful fiction, for their purple colour : CHAP. V.

SONETTO.

Non di verdi giardin, ornati, e colti
Del soave e dolce aere Pestano,
Veniam Madonna, in la tua bianca mano ;
Ma in aspre selve, e valli ombrose colti ;
Ove Venere afflitta, e in pensier molti,
Pel periglio d'Adon correndo in vano,
Un spino acuto al nudo piè villano
Sparse del divin sangue i boschi folti :
Noi sommettemmo allora il bianco fiore,
Tanto che'l divin sangue non aggiunge
A terra, ond' il color purpureo nacque.
Non aure estive, o rivi tolti a lunge
Noi nutrit' anno, ma sospir d'amore
L'aure son sute, e pianti d'Amor l'acque.

Not from the verdant garden's cultur'd bound,
That breathes of Pœstum's aromatick gale,
We sprung ; but nurslings of the lonely vale,
'Midst woods obscure, and native glooms were found.
'Midst woods and glooms, whose tangled brakes around
Once Venus sorrowing traced, as all forlorn
She sought Adonis, when a lurking thorn
Deep on her foot impress'd an impious wound.
Then prone to earth we bow'd our pallid flowers,
And caught the drops divine ; the purple dies

Tinging

CHAP. V.

Tinging the lustre of our native hue:
Nor summer gales, nor art-conducted showers
Have nursed our slender forms, but lovers' sighs
Have been our gales, and lovers' tears our dew.

Of the passions and affections.

The province of the poet is not, however, confined to the representation, or to the combination of material and external objects. The fields of intellect are equally subject to his control. The affections and passions of the human mind, the abstract ideas of unsubstantial existence, serve in their turn to exercise his powers. In arranging themselves under his dominion, it becomes necessary that they should take a visible and substantial form, distinguished by their attributes, their insignia, and their effects. With this form the imagination of the poet invests them, and they then become as subservient to his purpose as if they were objects of external sense. In process of time, some of these children of imagination acquire a kind of prescriptive identity; and the symbolick forms of pleasure, or of wisdom, present themselves to our minds in nearly as definite a manner as the natural ones of Ajax, or of Achilles. Thus embodied, they become important actors in the drama, and are scarcely distinguishable from human character. But the offspring of fancy is infinite; and however the regions of poetry may

may seem to be peopled with these fantastick beings, genius will still proceed to invent, to vary, and to combine.

Comparative excellence of the ancients and moderns in the use of the *prosopopœia*.

If the moderns excel the ancients in any department of poetry, it is in that now under consideration. It must not indeed be supposed that the ancients were insensible of the effects produced by this powerful charm, which more peculiarly than any other may be said

> —— *To give to airy nothing,*
> *A local habitation and a name.*

But it may be safely asserted, that they have availed themselves of this creative faculty, much more sparingly, and with much less success, than their modern competitors. The attribution of sense to inert objects is indeed common to both; but that still bolder exertion which imbodies abstract existence, and renders it susceptible of ocular representation, is almost exclusively the boast of the moderns[y]. If, however, we advert to

[y] If Virgil have given us a highly finished personification of rumour; if Horace speak of his *atra cura*; if Lucretius present us with an awful picture of superstition; their portraits are so vague as scarcely to communicate any discriminate idea, and are characterised by their operation and effects, rather than by their poetical insignia.

CHAP. V. to the few authors who preceded Lorenzo de' Medici, we shall not trace in their writings many striking instances of those imbodied pictures of ideal existence, which are so conspicuous in the works of Ariosto, Spenser, Milton, and subsequent writers of the higher class, who are either natives of Italy, or have formed their taste upon the poets of that nation[z].

The

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insignia. Of the ancient Roman authors, perhaps there is no one that abounds in these personifications more than the tragedian Seneca; yet what idea do we form of labour when we are told, that

Labor exoritur durus, et omnes
Agitat curas, aperitque domos.

Or of hope or fear from the following passage:

Turbine magni, spes solicitæ
Urbibus errant, trepidique metus.

The personification of hope by Tibullus (*Lib.* ii. *Eleg.* 6.) is scarcely worthy of that charming author; and if he has been happier in his description of sleep, (*Lib.* i. *Eleg.* i.) it is still liable to the objections before mentioned.

[z] One of the finest personifications of Petrarca is that of liberty, in a beautiful canzone; which, on account of its political tendency, has been excluded from many editions of his works.

Libertà, dolce e desiato bene!
Mal conosciuto a chi talor no'l perde;

Quanto

CHAP. V.

Instances of this figure.

The writings of Lorenzo afford many instances of genuine poetical personification; some of which will not suffer by a comparison with those of any of his most celebrated successours. Of this his representation of jealousy may afford no inadequate proof.

Solo una vecchia in un oscuro canto,
Pallida, il sol fuggendo, si sedea,
Tacita sospirando, ed un ammanto
D'un incerto color cangiante havea:
Cento occhi ha in testa, e tutti versan pianto
E cent' orecchie la maligna dea:
Quel ch' è, quel che non è, trista ode e vede;
Mai dorme, ed ostinata a se sol crede.

Sad in a nook obscure, and sighing deep,
A pale and haggard beldam shrinks from view;
Her

Quanto gradito al buon mondo esser dei.
Per te la vita vien fiorita e verde,
Per te stato gioioso mi mantiene,
Ch'ir mi fa somiglianti a gli alti dei:
Senza te, lungamente non vorrei
Ricchezze, onor, e cio ch'uom più desia,
Ma teco ogni tugurio acqueta l'alma.

Yet the painter who would represent the allegorical form of liberty, would derive but little assistance from the imagination of the poet.

CHAP. V.

Her gloomy vigils there she loves to keep,
Wrapt in a robe of ever-changing hue;
A hundred eyes she has, that ceaseless weep,
A hundred ears, that pay attention due.
Imagin'd evils aggravate her grief,
Heedless of sleep, and stubborn to relief.

If his personification of hope be less discriminate, it is to be attributed to the nature of that passion, of which uncertainty is in some degree the characteristick.

È una donna di statura immensa,
La cima de' capelli al ciel par monti;
Formata, e vestita è di nebbia densa;
Abita il sommo de' più alti monti,
Se i nugoli guardando un forma, pensa
Nove forme veder d'animal pronti,
Che'l vento muta, e poi di novo figne
Così Amor questa vana dipigne.

Immense of bulk, her towering head she shews,
Her floating tresses seem to touch the skies,
Dark mists her unsubstantial shape compose,
And on the mountain's top her dwelling lies.
As when the clouds fantastick shapes disclose,
For ever varying to the gazer's eyes,
Till on the breeze the changeful hues escape,
Thus vague her form, and mutable her shape.

Her

Her attendants are also highly characteristick. CHAP. V.

Seguon questa infelice in ogni parte
Il sogno, e l' augurio, e la bugia,
E chiromanti, ed ogni fallace arte,
Sorte, indovini, e falza profezia:
La vocale, e la scritta in sciocche carte,
Che dicon, quando è stato, quel che fia:
L'archimia, e chi di terra il ciel misura,
E fatta a volontà la conjettura.

Illusive beings round their sovereign wait,
Deceitful dreams, and auguries, and lies,
Innumerous arts the gaping crowd that cheat,
Predictions wild, and groundless prophecies;
With wondrous words, or written rolls of fate,
Foretelling—when 'tis past—what yet shall rise;
And alchymy, and astrologick skill,
And fond conjecture—always form'd at will.

Though not perhaps strictly to be ranked in this department, I shall not deprive my readers of the following fanciful description of the formation of the lover's chain.

Non già così la mia bella catena
Stringe il mio cor gentil, pien di dolcezza:
Di tre nodi composta lieto il mena
Con le sue mani; il primo fe bellezza,

La

CHAP. V.

La pietà l'altro per sì dolce pena,
E l'altro amor; nè tempo alcun gli spezza:
La bella mano insieme poi gli strinse
E di sì dolce laccio il cor avvinse.

* * *

Quando tessuta fu questa catena,
L'aria, la terra, il ciel lieto concorse:
L'aria non fu giammai tanto serena,
Nè il sol giammai sì bella luce porse:
Di frondi giovinette, e di fior piena
La terra lieta, ov'un chiar rivo corse:
Ciprigna in grembo al padre il dì si mise,
Lieta mirò dal ciel quel loco, e rise.

Dal divin capo, ed amoroso seno,
Prese con ambo man rose diverse,
E le sparse nel ciel queto e sereno:
Di questi fior la mia donna coperse.
Giove benigno, di letizia pieno,
Gli umani orecchi quel bel giorno aperse
A sentir la celeste melodia,
Che in canti, ritmi, e suon, dal ciel venia.

Dear are those bonds my willing heart that bind,
Form'd of three chords, in mystick union twin'd;
The first by beauty's rosy fingers wove,
The next by pity, and the third by love.
—The hour that gave this wondrous texture birth,
Saw in sweet union, heaven, and air, and earth;

Serene

Serene and soft all ether breath'd delight,
The sun diffus'd a mild and temper'd light;
New leaves the trees, sweet flowers adorned the mead,
And sparkling rivers gush'd along the glade.
Repos'd on Jove's own breast, his favourite child
The Cyprian queen, beheld the scene and smil'd;
Then with bold hands, from her ambrosial head,
And amorous breast, a shower of roses shed,
The heavenly shower descending soft and slow,
Pour'd all its fragrance on my fair below;
Whilst all benign the ruler of the spheres
To sounds celestial open'd mortal ears.

Various species of poetry cultivated by Lorenzo.

From the foregoing specimens we may be enabled to form a general idea of the merits of Lorenzo de' Medici, and may perceive, that of the essential requisites of poetick composition, instances are to be found in his writings. The talents of a poet he certainly possessed. But before we can form a complete estimate of his poetical character, it will be necessary to inquire to what purpose those talents were applied, and this can only be done by taking a view of the different departments of poetry in which he employed his pen. In the execution of this task, we may also be enabled to ascertain how far he has imitated his predecessors, and how far he has himself been a model to those who have succeeded him.

The

CHAP. V.

Origin of the Italian sonnet.

The Italian sonnet is a species of composition almost coëval with the language itself; and may be traced back to that period when the Latin tongue, corrupted by the vulgar pronunciation, and intermixed with the idioms of the different nations that from time to time over-ran Italy, degenerated into what was called the *lingua volgare;* which language, though at first rude and unpolished, was, by successive exertions, reduced to a regular and determinate standard, and obtained at length a superiority over the Latin, not only in common use, but in the written compositions of the learned. The form of the sonnet, confined to a certain versification, and to a certain number of lines, was unknown to the Roman poets, who adopting a legitimate measure, employed it as long as the subject required it, but was probably derived from the Provençals; although instances of the regular stanza, now used in these compositions, may be traced amongst the Italians, as early as the thirteenth century[a]. From that time to the present, the sonnet has retained its precise form, and has been the most favourite mode of composition in the

[a] For a learned and curious disquisition on the origin of the Sonetto, *v. Annotazioni di Francesco Redi, al suo ditirambo di Bacco in Toscana, p.* 99.

the Italian tongue. It may, however, be justly doubted, whether the Italian poesy has, upon the whole, derived any great advantage from the frequent use of the sonnet. Confined to so narrow a compass, it admits not of that extent and range of ideas which suggest themselves to a mind already warm with its subject. On the contrary, it illustrates only some one distinct idea, and this must be extended or condensed, not as its nature requires, but as the rigid laws of the composition prescribe. One of the highest excellencies of a master in this art consists, therefore, in the selection of a subject neither too long nor too short for the space which it is intended to occupy[b]. Hence the invention is cramped, and the free excursions of the mind are fettered and restrained. Hence, too, the greater part of these compositions display rather the glitter of wit than the fire of genius; and hence they have been almost solely appropriated to the illustration of the passion of love: a subject which, from

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[b] The following remarks by Lorenzo de' Medici, on this kind of composition, are as judicious as they are pointed and concise: "La brevità del sonetto non com-" porta, che una sola parola sia vana, ed il vero subietto " e materia del sonetto debbe essere qualche acuta e " gentile sentenza, narrata attamente, ed in pochi versi " ristretta, e fuggendo la oscurità e durezza."

Comment. di Lor. de' Med. sopra i suoi Sonetti, p. 120. *Ed. Ald.* 1554.

CHAP. V. from its various nature, and the endless analogies of which it admits, is more susceptible than any other, of being apportioned into those detached sentiments of which the sonnet is composed.

To these restraints, however, the stern genius of Dante frequently submitted. In his *Vita Nuova* we have a considerable number of his sonnets, which bear the distinct marks of his character, and derogate not from the author of the *Divina Commedia*[c]. These sonnets are uniformly devoted to the praises of his Beatrice; but his passion is so spiritualized, and so remote from gross and earthly objects, that great doubts have arisen among his commentators, whether the object of his adoration had a substantial existence, or was any thing more than the abstract

[c] If written in later times, some of these sonnets might have been thought to border on impiety. Thus the poet addresses the faithful—in love—

"A ciascun alma presa, e gentil core,
"Nel cui cospetto viene il dir presente,
"In ciò chè mi rescrivan suo parvente,
"Salute in lor signore—cioè Amore."

And again, in allusion to a well-known passage,

"O voi che per la via d'amor passate,
"Attendéte e guardate,
"S'egli è dolore alcun quanto 'l mio grave."

Vita Nuova di Dante, Fir. 1723.

abstract idea of wisdom, or philosophy. Certain it is, that the abstruse and recondite sense of these productions seems but little suited to the comprehension of that sex to which they are addressed, and ill calculated to promote the success of an amorous passion. The reputation of Dante as a poet is not, however, founded on this part of his labours; but Petrarca, whose other works have long been neglected, is indebted to his sonnets and lyrick productions for the high rank which he yet holds in the publick estimation. Without degrading his subject by gross and sensual images, he has rendered it susceptible of general apprehension; and, whether his passion was real or pretended, for even this has been doubted[d], he has traced the effects of love through every turn and winding of the human bosom; so that it is scarcely possible for a lover to find himself so situated, as not to meet with his own peculiar feelings reflected in

[d] "Interpretabar olim nostri Petrarchæ Elegias, Lyricosque, quibus Lauram canit; aderantque adversarii, qui Lauram fuisse negarent, assererentque non illo nomine puellam a se amatam intelligi, sed aliud allegorice ibi latere." (*Land. in Interp. Carm. Hor. lib.* 2. *ap. Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v.* i. *p.* 232.) where it appears that Landino passed a tolerable jest on these refined criticks.

CHAP. V. in some passage or other of that engaging author.

Without possessing the terseness of those of Dante, or the polish and harmony of those of Petrarca, the sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici have indisputable pretensions to high poetical excellence. It is indeed to be regretted, that, like those of his two celebrated predecessors, they are almost all devoted to one subject—the illustration of an amorous passion; but he has so diversified and embellished them with images drawn from other sources, as to rescue them from that general censure of insipidity, which may properly be applied to the greater part of the productions of the Italians, in this their favourite mode of composition. These images he has sought for in almost all the appearances of nature, in the annals of history, the wilds of mythology, and the mysteries of the Platonick philosophy; and has exhibited them with a splendour and vivacity peculiar to himself. If the productions of Dante resemble the austere grandeur of Michael Agnolo, or if those of Petrarca remind us of the ease and gracefulness of Raffaello, the works of Lorenzo may be compared to the less correct, but more animated and splendid labours of the Venetian school. The poets, as well as the painters, each formed

formed a distinct class, and have each had their exclusive admirers and imitators. In the beginning of the succeeding century, the celebrated Pietro Bembo attempted again to introduce the style of Petrarca; but his sonnets, though correct and chaste, are too often formal and insipid. Those of Casa, formed upon the same model, possess much more ease, and a greater flow of sentiment. Succeeding authors united the correctness of Petrarca with the bolder colouring of Lorenzo; and in the works of Ariosto, the two Tassos, Costanzo, Tansillo, and Guarini, the poetry of Italy attained its highest degree of perfection. CHAP. V.

The sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici are intermixed with *Canzoni*, *Sestine*, and other lyrick productions, which in general display an equal elegance of sentiment, and brilliancy of expression. One of his biographers is, however, of opinion, that the merit of his odes is inferiour to that of his sonnets[e]; but it is not easy to discover any striking evidence of the propriety of this remark. It must not, however, be denied, that his writings occasionally display too evident proofs

[e] Felicior mihi fuisse videtur in brevioribus epigrammatibus, quam in odis. *Fab. in vitâ Laur. v.* i. *p.* 10.

CHAP. V. proofs of that haste with which it is probable they were all composed; or that they are sometimes interspersed with modes of expression, which would scarcely have been tolerated among the more accurate and polished writers of the succeeding century. The language of Lorenzo de' Medici appears even more obsolete, and is more tinctured with the rusticity of the vulgar dialect, than that of Petrarca, who preceded him by so long an interval. But, with all these defects, the intrinsick merit of his writings has been acknowledged by all those who have been able to devest themselves of an undue partiality for the fashion of the day, and who can discern true excellence, through the disadvantages of a dress in some respects antiquated, or negligent. Muratori, in his treatise on the poetry of Italy, has accordingly adduced several of the sonnets of Lorenzo, as examples of elegant composition: "It is gold from the mine[f]," says that judicious critick, adverting to one of these pieces, "mixed indeed with ruder materials, yet it is "always gold[g]."

The

[f] E' oro di miniera, mischiato, con rozza terra, ma sempre è oro.

Murat. della perfetta poesia Italiana, v. ii. *p.* 376.

[g] In the general collection of the poems of Lorenzo, printed by Aldo in 1554, his sonnets are accompanied with

The *Selve d' amore* of Lorenzo de' Medici is a composition in *ottava rima*, and, though it extend to

CHAP. V.

with a copious commentary, which exhibits many striking traits of his character, and is a very favourable specimen of his prose composition. This commentary has not been reprinted; and the copies of this edition have long been of such rare occurrence in Italy, that even Cionacci, the editor of the sacred poems of Lorenzo, and of others of the Medici family, in 1680, had never been able to obtain a sight of the book. "Di questi due," says he, adverting to the *Selve d' amore*, and the *Libro di Rime, intitolato Poesie volgari*, "fa menzione il Poccianti, e il Valori, sopra "citati; ma io non ho veduto se non *il primo*, stampato "in ottavo." *Cion. osserv.* 28. This volume is entitled "POESIE VOLGARI, NUOVAMENTE STAMPATE DI LORENZO "DE' MEDICI, CHE FU PADRE DI PAPA LEONE." *Col commento del medesimo sopra alcuni de' suoi sonetti. In Vinegia* M.D.LIIII. From the expression *nuovamente stampate*, we might infer, that these poems had before been printed; but I have not been able to discover any trace of a former impression; and Apostolo Zeno, in his notes on the *Biblioteca Italiana* of Fontanini, *v.* ii. *p.* 59. *Ed. Ven.* 1753, expressly informs us that this is the only edition known, "l'unica edizione delle poesie del Magnifico." A variation, however, occurs in the copies: the sheet marked with the letter O having, in the greater part of the edition, been reduced from eight leaves to four, as appears by a defect in the numeration of the pages. This is generally understood to have arisen from the scrupulous delicacy of the printer, who, having discovered some indecent pieces, inserted from the *Canzoni a ballo*, cancelled the leaves in such copies as remained unsold, and hence the copies

CHAP. V. to a considerable length, deserves to be held at least in equal esteem with his sonnets and lyrick productions[h]. The stanza in which it is written is the

copies which contain the sheet O complete have, in the perverse estimation of bibliographers and collectors, acquired an additional value. On an examination of the pieces thus omitted, I have, however, some doubts, whether the reason above assigned be the true motive for the caution of the printer; a caution which I conceive was rather occasioned by an apprehension of the censures of the inquisition, for his having unaccountably blended in the same poem some pious stanzas with others of a more terrestrial nature, intended for a different poem, without giving the reader due notice, by a proper separation or distinct title, of so unexpected a change of sentiment. In consequence of which a poem on the resurrection of Christ is terminated by some stanzas that relate only to a mere mortal passion. The works of Lorenzo were reprinted, with the addition of several pieces, at Bergamo, in octavo, in 1763.

[h] This poem has been several times printed. The earliest edition which I have seen is "*Impresso in Pesaro* "*per Hieronymo Soncino nel* M.CCCCCXIII *a di* XV *di Luglio*," under the title of STANZE BELLISSIME ET ORNATISSIME INTITULATE LE SELVE D' AMORE COMPOSTE DAL MAGNIFICO LORENZO DI PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI. It was again printed by *Matthio Pagan* at Venice, in 1554, and is also inserted in the Aldine and Bergamo edition of his works. In the last mentioned edition it is, however, preceded by thirty *stanze*, which form a poem entirely distinct in its subject, though not inferiour in merit; and the reader ought to commence the perusal of the *Selve d' amore* at the thirty-first stanza, "*Dopo tanti sospiri e tanti omei.*"

the most favourite mode of versification amongst the Italians, and has been introduced with great success into the English language. It was first reduced to its regular form by Boccaccio, who employed it in his heroick romances, the *Theseide* and the *Filostrato*[i]; but the poems of Ariosto and of Torquato Tasso have established it as the vehicle of epick composition[k]. These *stanze* were produced by Lorenzo at an early age, and are undoubtedly the same of which Landino and Valori expressed such warm approbation[l]. The estimation

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[i] *Crescim. v.* i. *p.* 200. *Manni Istoria del Decamerone, p.* 52.

[k] Notwithstanding these illustrious authorities, it may perhaps be allowable to doubt, whether a series of stanzas be the most eligible mode of narrating an epick, or indeed any other extensive kind of poem. That it is not natural must be admitted; for naturally we do not apportion the expression of our sentiments into equal divisions; and that which is not natural cannot in general long be pleasing. Hence the works of Ariosto, of Tasso, and of Spenser, labour under a disadvantage which it required all the vigour of genius to surmount; and this is the more to be regretted, as both the Italian and the English languages admit of compositions in blank verse, productive of every variety of harmony.

[l] Legere memini opusculum ejus amatorium, cum eodem Gentile, lepidum admodum, et expolitum, multiplex, varium, copiosum, elegans, ut nihil supra. Chris-

CHAP. V. estimation in which they were held may be determined by the many imitations which have appeared from Benivieni[m], Serafino d'Aquila[n], Politiano[o], Lodovico

Christophorus certe Landinus per ea tempora poeta et orator insignis, viso carmine, in hoc, inquit, scribendi genere, ceteros hic sine controversia superabit: id quod etiam suis scriptis testatum reliquit. Nec mirum quum ingenium alioqui maximum, vis ingens amoris accenderit. *Val. in Vitâ, p.* 8.

[m] *I dilettevoli amori di messer Girolamo Benivieni Fiorentino*, printed at Venice, by *Nicolo d' Aristotile di Ferrara, detto Zoppino*, 1537, with another poem entitled, *Caccia bellissima del Reverendissimo Egidio*, and several pieces of the count Matteo Bojardo. This piece of Benivieni is not printed in the general edition of his works. *Ven.* 1524.

[n] *Strambotti di Serafino d' Aquila.* This celebrated poet and improvvisatore, "A quo," says Paolo Cortese, "ita "est verborum et cantuum conjunctio modulata nexa, "ut nihil fieri posset modorum ratione dulcius," was born in 1466, and died in 1500. *Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v.* vi. *parte* 2. *p.* 154. His works have been frequently printed; but the edition most esteemed is that of Florence, by the Giunti, in 1516. Zeno has cited no less than sixteen editions of the works of Serafino, the latest of which is in the year 1550. *Bibl. Ital. v.* i. *p.* 429.

[o] Some of these *Stanze* of Politiano were first published in the edition of his works by Comino, *Padua*, 1765; but, being there left imperfect, I have given a complete copy in the Appendix, as they have been preserved in the Laurentian library.

v. Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. t. v. *p.* 51. *App.* *No.* XXXVII.

Lodovico Martelli[p], and others; who seem to have contended with each other for superiority in a species of poetry which gives full scope to the imagination, and in which the author takes the liberty of expatiating on any subject, which he conceives to be likely to engage the attention and obtain the favour of his mistress. CHAP. V.

Among the poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, which have been preserved for three centuries in manuscript, in the Laurentian Library, and which are given to the publick for the first time at the close of the present work[q], is a beautiful Ovidian allegory, entitled *Ambra*, being the name of a small island, formed by the river Ombrone, near Lorenzo's villa at Poggio Cajano, the destruction of which is the subject of the poem. This favourite spot he had improved and ornamented with great assiduity, and

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[p] *Stanze in lode delle Donne*, printed in the works of this author. *Flor.* 1548.

[q] About a dozen copies of these poems were printed in the year 1791, chiefly for the purpose of regulating the text; which have since been distributed by the editor amongst his friends. This he thinks it necessary to mention, to prevent any misapprehension on the part of those into whose hands such volume may chance to fall.

CHAP. V.

and was extremely delighted with the retired situation and romantick aspect of the place[r]. He was not, however, without apprehensions that the rapidity of the river might destroy his improvements, which misfortune he endeavoured to prevent by every possible precaution; but his cares were ineffectual; an inundation took place, and sweeping away his labours, left him no consolation but that of immortalizing his *Ambra* in the poem now alluded to[s]. The same stanza is employed by Lorenzo in his poem on hawking, now also first published under the title of *La Caccia col Falcone.* This piece is apparently founded on a real incident. The author here gives us a very circumstantial, and

Poem of *Ambra.*

Poem on hawking.

[r] Laurentius Medices—qui scilicet Ambram ipsam Cajanam, prædium (ut ita dixerim) omniferum, quasi pro laxamento sibi delegit civilium laborum.

Pol. ad Laur. Tornabonum in Op. ap. Ald.

[s] This is not the only occasion on which *Ambra* has been celebrated in the language of poetry. Politiano has given the same title to his beautiful Latin poem devoted to the praises of Homer; in the close of which is a particular description of this favourite spot, which was at that time thought to be sufficiently secured against the turbulence of the flood:

"Ambra mei Laurentis amor, quam corniger Umbro
"Umbro senex genuit, domino gratissimus Arno;
"Umbro, suo tandem non erupturus ab alveo."

and at the same time a very lively account of this once popular diversion, from the departure of the company in the morning, to their return in the heat of the day. The scene is most probably at Poggio-Cajano, where he frequently partook of the diversions of hunting and of hawking, the latter of which he is said to have preferred[t]. In this poem, wherein the author has introduced many of his companions by name the reader will find much native humour, and a striking picture of the manners of the times. CHAP. V.

Moral pieces.

Lorenzo has, however, occasionally assumed in his writings a more serious character. His *Altercazione*, or poem explanatory of the Platonick philosophy, has before attracted our notice; but notwithstanding this attempt has great merit, and elucidates with some degree of poetical ornament a dry and difficult subject, it is much inferiour to his moral poems, one of which in particular exhibits a force of expression, a grandeur and elevation of sentiment, of which his predecessors had set him no example, and which

[t] Circa quoque prætorium Cajanum, quod regali magnificentia a fundamentis erexit, prædia habuit proventus maximi, et amœnitatis plurimæ, quibus in locis frequens esset venationibus deditus, sed multo magis falconum et ejusmodi avium volatibus. *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p.* 39.

CHAP. V. which perhaps none of his countrymen have since excelled. This piece, in which the author calls upon the faculties of his own mind to exert themselves to great and useful purposes, thus commences :

Destati pigro ingegno da quel sonno,
Che par che gli occhi tuoi d'un vel ricopra,
Onde veder la verità non ponno ;
Svegliati omai ; contempla, ogni tua opra
Quanto disutil sia, vana, e fallace,
Poi che il desio alla ragione è sopra.
Deh pensa, quanto falsamente piace,
Onore, utilitate, ovver diletto,
Ove per più s'afferma esser la pace ;
Pensa alla dignità del tuo intelletto,
Non dato per seguir cosa mortale,
Ma perchè avessi il cielo per suo obietto.
Sai per esperienza, quanto vale
Quel, ch' altri chiama ben, dal ben più scosto,
Che l'oriente dall' occidentale.
Quella vaghezza, ch' a gli occhi ha proposto
Amor, e cominciò ne' teneri anni,
D' ogni tuo viver lieto t' ha disposto.
Brieve, fugace, falsa, e pien d' affanni,
Ornata in vista, ma è poi crudel mostro,
Che tien lupi e delfin sotto i bei panni.
Deh pensa, qual sarebbe il viver nostro,
Se quel, che de' tener la prima parte,
Preso avesse il cammin, qual io t'ho mostro,
Pensa, se tanto tempo, ingegno, o arte,
Avessi volto al più giusto desio,
Ti potresti hor in pace consolarte.

Se

Se ver te fosse il tuo voler più pio,
Forse quel, che per te si brama, o spera,
Conosceresti me', s' è buono o rio.
Dell età tua la verde primavera
Hai consumata, e forse tal fia il resto,
Fin che del verno sia l'ultima sera;
Sotto falsa ombra, e sotto rio pretesto,
Persuadendo a te, che gentilezza
Che vien dal cuor, ha causato questo.
Questi tristi legami oramai spezza:
Leva dal collo tuo quella catena
Ch' avolto vi tenea falsa bellezza:
E la vana speranza, che ti mena,
Leva dal cuor, e fa il governo pigli
Di te, la parte più bella e serena:
Et sottometta questa a' suoi artigli
Ogni disir al suo voler contrario,
Con maggior forza, e con maggior consigli,
Sicchè sbattuto il suo tristo aversario,
Non drizzi più la venenosa cresta.

Rise from thy trance, my slumbering genius rise,
That shrouds from truth's pure beam thy torpid eyes!
Awake, and see, since reason gave the rein
To low desire, thy every work how vain.
Ah think how false that bliss the mind explores,
In futile honours, or unbounded stores;
How poor the bait that would thy steps decoy
To sensual pleasure, and unmeaning joy.

Rouse

CHAP. V.

Rouse all thy powers, for better use designed,
And know thy native dignity of mind;
Not for low aims and mortal triumphs given,
Its means exertion, and its object heaven.
Hast thou not yet the difference understood,
'Twixt empty pleasure, and substantial good?
Not more opposed—by all the wise confest,
The rising orient from the farthest west.
Doom'd from thy youth the galling chain to prove
Of potent beauty, and imperious love,
Their tyrant rule has blighted all thy time,
And marr'd the promise of thy early prime.
Tho' beauty's garb thy wondering gaze may win,
Yet know that wolves, that harpies dwell within.
Ah think, how fair thy better hopes had sped,
Thy widely erring steps had reason led;
Think, if thy time a nobler use had known,
Ere this the glorious prize had been thine own.
Kind to thyself, thy clear discerning will
Had wisely learnt to sever good from ill.
Thy spring-tide hours consum'd in vain delight,
Shall the same follies close thy wintry night?
With vain pretexts of beauty's potent charms,
And nature's frailty, blunting reason's arms?
—At length thy long-lost liberty regain,
Tear the strong tie, and break the inglorious chain,
Freed from false hopes, assume thy native powers,
And give to reason's rule thy future hours;
To her dominion yield thy trusting soul,
And bend thy wishes to her strong control;
Till love, the serpent that destroy'd thy rest,
Crush'd by her hand shall mourn his humbled crest.

The

The sacred poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, distinguished by the names of *Orazioni*, and *Laude*[u], have been several times printed in various ancient collections, from which they were selected and published (with others by different persons of the same family) by Cionacci at Florence, in the year 1680[v]. The authors of the other poems in this collection are Lucretia the mother of Lorenzo, Pier Francesco his cousin, and Bernardo d'Alamanni de' Medici; but the reputation of Lorenzo as a poet will not be much increased by our assigning to him a decided superiority over his kindred. The poems of Lorenzo need not, however, the equivocal approbation of comparative praise, as they possess a great degree of positive excellence. In the following beautiful and affecting address to the Deity, the sublimity of the Hebrew original is tempered

CHAP. V.

Sacred poems.

[u] Of the union of poetry and musick in the *Laude Spirituali*, or sacred songs, Dr. Burney has traced the origin in Italy, and has given a specimen of a hymn to the Trinity, with the musick, so early as the year 1336, from the MS. which he had himself consulted in the Magliabechi library. *v. Hist. of Musick, vol.* ii. *pag.* 326.

[v] RIME SACRE *dal Magnifico* LORENZO DE' MEDICI *il Vecchio, di Madonna* LUCREZIA SUA MADRE, *e d' altri della stessa famiglia. Raccolte e d' osservazioni corredate per Francesco Cionacci. In Firenze* 1680.

CHAP. V. tempered with the softer notes of the Italian muse[w].

ORAZIONE.

Oda il sacro inno tutta la natura,
Oda la terra, e nubilosi e foschi
Turbini, e piove, che fan l' aere oscura.
Silenzj ombrosi, e solitari boschi:
Posate venti: udite cieli il canto,
Perchè il creato il creator conoschi.
Il creatore, e 'l tutto, e 'l uno, io canto;
Queste sacre orazion sieno esaudite
Dell' immortale Dio dal cerchio santo.

Il

[w] Since the above was written, I have discovered this hymn to be a paraphrase of "*The Secret Song, or Hymn of Regeneration,*" in the *Pymander* of Hermes Trismegistus, who is said to have been the lawgiver of Egypt, and the inventer of hieroglyphick writing, and to have lived sixteen centuries before Christ. In the Laurentian library (*Plut.* xxi. *Cod.* 8. *v. Band. Cat.* 1. 668.) is a translation of this work from the Greek by Ficino, bearing the date of 1463, and dedicated to Cosmo de' Medici; from which Lorenzo undoubtedly translated or imitated the ensuing poem. The translation by Ficino also appears in his printed works, *vol.* ii. *fl.* 789. *ed. Par.* 1641. An English version of the same author, said to be from the Arabic, by Dr. Everard, was published at London by *Thomas Brewster*, 1657. I scarcely need to observe, that the authenticity of this work is doubtful, it being generally regarded as a pious fraud, produced about the second century of the Christian era.

CHAP. V.

Il Fattor canto, che ha distribuite
Le terre; e 'l ciel bilancia; e quel che vuole,
Che sien dell' ocean dolci acque uscite
Per nutrimento dell' umana prole;
Per quale ancor comanda, sopra splenda
Il fuoco, e perchè Dio adora e cole.
Grazie ciascun con una voce renda
A lui, che passa i ciel; qual vive e sente,
Crea, e convien da lui natura prenda.
Questo è solo e vero occhio della mente,
Delle potenzie; a lui le laude date,
Questo riceverà benignamente.
O forze mie, costui solo laudate;
Ogni virtù dell' alma questo nume
Laudi, conforme alla mia voluntate.
Santa è la cognizion, che del tuo lume
Splende, e canta illustrato in allegrezza
D' intelligibil luce il mio acume.
O tutte mie potenzie, in gran dolcezza
Meco cantate, o spirti miei costanti,
Cantate la costante sua fermezza.
La mia giustizia per me il giusto canti:
Laudate meco il tutto insieme e intero,
Gli spirti uniti, e membri tutti quanti.
Canti per me la veritate il vero,
E tutto 'l nostro buon, canti esso bene,
Ben, che appetisce ciascun desidero.
O vita, o luce, da voi in noi viene
La benedizion; grazie t' ho io,
O Dio, da cui potenzia ogn' atto viene.
Il vero tuo per me te lauda Dio;
Per me ancor delle parole sante
Riceve il mondo il sacrificio pio.

Questo

CHAP. V.

Questo chieggon le forze mie clamante :
Cantato il tutto, e così son perfette
Da lor l' alte tue voglie tutte quante.
Il tuo disio da te in te reflette ;
Ricevi il sacrificio, o santo Re,
Delle parole pie da ciascun dette.
O vita, salva tutto quel ch' é in me ;
Le tenebre, ove l' alma par vanegge
Luce illumina tu, che luce se'.
Spirto Dio, il verbo tuo la mente regge,
Opifice, che spirto a ciascun dai,
Tu sol se' Dio, onde ogni cosa ha legge.
L' uomo tuo questo chiama sempre mai ;
Per fuoco, aria, acqua, e terra t' ha pregato,
Per lo spirto, e per quel che creato hai.
Dall' eterno ho benedizion trovato,
E spero, come io son desideroso,
Trovar nel tuo disio tranquillo stato ;
Fuor di te Dio, non è vero riposo.

All nature, hear the sacred song !
Attend, O earth, the solemn strain !
Ye whirlwinds wild that sweep along ;
Ye darkening storms of beating rain ;
Umbrageous glooms, and forests drear ;
And solitary deserts, hear !
Be still, ye winds, whilst to the Maker's praise
The creature of his power aspires his voice to raise.

O may the solemn breathing sound
Like incense rise before the throne,
Where he, whose glory knows no bound,
Great cause of all things, dwells alone.

'Tis

'Tis he I sing, whose powerful hand
Balanc'd the skies, outspread the land;
Who spoke—from ocean's stores sweet waters came,
And burst resplendent forth the heaven-aspiring flame.

CHAP. V.

One general song of praise arise
To him whose goodness ceaseless flows;
Who dwells enthron'd beyond the skies,
And life, and breath, on all bestows.
Great source of intellect, his ear
Benign receives our vows sincere:
Rise then, my active powers, your task fulfil,
And give to him your praise, responsive to my will.

Partaker of that living stream
Of light, that pours an endless blaze,
O let thy strong reflected beam,
My understanding speak his praise:
My soul, in stedfast love secure,
Praise him whose word is ever sure:
To him, sole just, my sense of right incline,
Join every prostrate limb, my ardent spirit join.

Let all of good this bosom fires,
To him, sole good, give praises due:
Let all the truth himself inspires,
Unite to sing him only true.
To him my every thought ascend,
To him my hopes, my wishes, bend.
From earth's wide bounds let louder hymns arise,
And his own word convey the pious sacrifice.

In

CHAP. V.

In ardent adoration join'd,
Obedient to thy holy will,
Let all my faculties combin'd,
Thy just desires, O God, fulfil.
From thee deriv'd, eternal king,
To thee our noblest powers we bring:
O may thy hand direct our wandering way,
O bid thy light arise, and chase the clouds away.

Eternal spirit! whose command
Light, life, and being, gave to all;
O hear the creature of thy hand,
Man, constant on thy goodness call:
By fire, by water, air, and earth,
That soul to thee that owes its birth,
By these, he supplicates thy blest repose,
Absent from thee no rest his wandering spirit knows.

The *Beoni* of Lorenzo.

The Italian language had not yet been applied to the purposes of satire, unless we may be allowed to apply that name to some parts of the *Commedia* of Dante, or the unpublished poem of Burchiello before noticed. The *Beoni*[x] of Lorenzo de' Medici is perhaps the earliest

Rise of the jocose Italian satire.

[x] The *Beoni*, or *Simposio* of Lorenzo, was first published by the Giunti, at Florence, 1568, with the sonnets of Burchiello, Alamanni, and Risoluto; and was afterwards inserted in the third volume of the collection of the

earliest production that properly ranks under this title; the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs, which we shall hereafter notice, and which are supposed by Bianchini to have set the first example of the jocose Italian satire, being a very different kind of composition[y]. This piece is

CHAP. V.

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the *Opere Burlesche*, printed with the date of (London) 1723. In the former edition many of the objectionable passages are omitted, which are, however, restored in the latter. The editors of the poems of Lorenzo, published at Bergamo in 1763, have again mutilated this poem, having totally omitted the 8th capitolo, as *mancante e licenzioso*. In all the editions the work is left imperfect, and ends in the midst of the 9th capitolo; after which, in the edition of 1568, it is added, "*Dicon ch' el magnifico* "*Autore lasciò l'opera così imperfetta.*"

y "Or questi *Canti Carnascialeschi*, fatti per intrat-"tenere allegramente il popolo, io gli considero come "non solamente primi, ma grandi avanzamenti altresì "della giocosa satira Italiana; a quali aggiugnere dob-"biamo *I Beoni*, e *La Campagnia del Mantellaccio*, compo-"nimenti dello stesso Lorenzo de' Medici, i quali furono "scritti da quel grand' uomo per sollievo delle pubbliche "gravose occupazioni, e dagli studj piu sublimi delle "scienze, &c." *Bianchini, della satira Italiana, p.* 33. *Ed. Fir.* 1729. *La Compagnia del Mantellaccio* was not however written by Lorenzo, though it has frequently been attributed to him. In the earliest edition I have seen of this poem, which is without a date, but was probably printed before the year 1500, it appears without the

CHAP. V.

is also composed in *terza rima*, and is a lively and severe reprehension of drunkenness. The author represents himself as returning, after a short absence, to Florence; when, as he approached towards the *Porta di Faenza*, he met many of his fellow-citizens, hastening along the road with the greatest precipitation. At length he had the good fortune to perceive an old acquaintance, to whom he gives the appellation of Bartolino, and whom he requests to explain to him the cause of this strange commotion.

Non altrimente a parete ugelletto,
Sentendo d' altri ugelli i dolci versi,
Sendo in cammin, si vólge a quell' effetto;
Così lui, benchè appena può tenersi,
Che li pareva al fermarsi fatica;
Che e' non s' acquista in fretta i passi persi.

—As when some bird a kindred note that hears,
His well known mate with note responsive cheers,
He recognised my voice and at the sound
Relaxed his speed; but difficult he found

The

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the name of its author. A more complete copy is annexed to the sonetti of Burchiello, Alamanni, and Risoluto, by the Giunti in 1568, where it is attributed to Lorenzo de' Medici; but it is by no means possessed of those characteristick excellencies that distinguish the generality of his works.

The task to stop, and great fatigue it seem'd,
For whilst he spoke, each moment lost he deem'd;
Then thus:

Bartolino informs him that they are all hastening to the bridge of Rifredi, to partake of a treat of excellent wine,

———che presti facci i lenti piedi.

That gives new vigour to the crippled feet.

He then characterizes his numerous companions, who, although sufficiently discriminated in other respects, all agree in their insatiable thirst. Three priests at length make their appearance; Lorenzo inquires

Colui chi è, che ha rosse le gote?
E due con seco con lunghe mantella?
Ed ei: ciascun di loro è sacerdote;
Quel ch' è più grasso, è il Piovan dell' Antella,
Perch' e' ti paja straccurato in viso,
Ha sempre seco pur la metadella:
L'altro, che drieto vien con dolce riso,
Con quel naso appuntato, lungo, e strano,
Ha fatto anche del ber suo paradiso;
Tien dignità, ch'è pastor Fiesolano,
Che ha in una sua tazza divozione.
Che ser Anton seco ha, suo cappellano.

Per

CHAP. V.

Per ogni loco, e per ogni stagione,
Sempre la fida tazza seco porta,
Non ti dico altro, sino a processione;
E credo questa fia sempre sua scorta,
Quando lui muterà paese o corte,
Questa sarà che picchierà la porta:
Questa sarà con lui dopo la morte,
E messa seco fia nel monimento,
Acciochè morto poi lo riconforte;
E questa lascerà per testamento.
Non hai tu visto a procession, quand' elli
Ch' ognun si fermi, fa comandamento?
E i canonici chiama suoi fratelli;
Tanto che tutti intorno li fan cerchio,
E mentre lo ricuopron co' mantelli,
Lui con la tazza, al viso fa coperchio.

With rosy cheeks who follows next, my friend,
And who the gownmen that his steps attend?
—Three pious priests—the chief in size and place,
Antella's rector—shows his vacant face;
He who, with easy smile and pointed nose,
In social converse with the rector goes,
Of Fesulé a dignified divine,
Has wisely placed his paradise in wine.
The favourite cup that all his wants supplies
Within whose circle his devotion lies,
His faithful curate, Ser Antonio brings——
—See, at his side the goodly vessel swings.
On all occasions, and where'er he bends
His way, this implement its lord attends;

Or

Or more officious, marches on before,
Prepares his road, and tinkles at the door;
This on his death-bed shall his thoughts employ,
And with him in his monument shall lie.
Hast thou not seen—if e'er thou chanc'd to meet
The slow procession moving through the street,
As the superiour issues his command,
His sable brethren close around him stand;
Then, whilst in pious act with hands outspread,
Each with his cassock shrouds his leader's head,
His face the toper covers with his cup,
And, ere the prayer be ended, drinks it up.

The fiery temperament of an habitual drunkard is described by the following whimsical hyperbole:

Come fu giunto in terra quell' umore,
Del fiero sputo, nell' arido smalto,
Unissi insieme l'umido e'l calore;
E poi quella virtù, che vien da alto,
Li diede spirto, e nacquene un ranocchio,
E inanzi a gli occhi nostri prese un salto.

He sneez'd: and as the burning humour fell,
The dust with vital warmth began to swell,
Hot, moist, and dry, their genial powers unite,
Up sprang a frog, and leapt before our sight.

CHAP. V.

So expeditious was Lorenzo in his compositions, that he is said to have written this piece nearly extempore, immediately after the incident on which it was founded took place[z]. Posterity ought to regard this poem with particular favour, as it has led the way to some of the most agreeable and poignant productions of the Italian poets, and is one of the earliest models of the satires and *capitoli* of Berni[a], Nelli,

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[z] Ex Caregio suo in urbem rediens, Satyram in bibaces, argumento e re nato, inchoavit simul et absolvit; opus in suo genere consummatissimum, salibus plurimis et lepore conditum. Fuit enim in hoc homine cum gravitate urbanitas multa. Quum jocabatur, nihil hilarius: quum mordebat, nihil asperius.

Valor. in vitâ Laur. p. 14.

[a] Francesco Berni, availing himself of the examples of Burchiello, Franco, Luigi Pulci, and Lorenzo de' Medici, cultivated this branch of poetry with such success, as to have been generally considered as the inventer of it; whence it has obtained the name of *Bernesche*. The characteristick of this poetry is an extreme simplicity of provincial diction, which the Italians denominate *Idiotismo*. The most extravagant sentiments, the most severe strokes of satire, are expressed in a manner so natural and easy, that the author himself seems unconscious of the effect of his own work. Perhaps the only indication of a similar taste in this country appears in the writings of the facetious Peter Pindar; but with this distinction, that the wit of the Italians generally consists in giving a whimsical

Nelli[b], Ariosto[c], Bentivoglio[d], and others, who form a numerous class of writers, in a mode of composition almost peculiar to the natives of Italy. CHAP. V.

Italy

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sical importance to subjects in themselves ridiculous or contemptible, whilst that of our countryman is for the most part shown in rendering things of importance ridiculous. The principal work of Berni is his *Orlando Innamorato*, being the poem of Bojardo, newly versified, or rather travestied; in the third book and 7th chapter, of which he has introduced, without much ceremony, some particulars of his own history, which the reader may not be displeased to find in the Appendix, No. XXXVIII.

[b] The satires of Pietro Nelli were published under the name of Andrea da Bergamo. *Ven.* 1546, 1584.

[c] In the satires of Ariosto, the author has faithfully recorded his family circumstances and connexions, the patronage with which he was honoured, and the mortifications and disappointments which he from time to time experienced: whilst his independent spirit, and generous resentment of the oppressive mandates of his superiours, are exhibited in a lively and interesting style. In the *Orlando Furioso* we admire the poet; but in the satires of Ariosto, we are familiarized with and love the man.

[d] Ercole Bentivoglio was of the same family that for many years held the sovereignty of Bologna. His satires do him infinite credit as a poet, and are scarcely inferiour to those of Ariosto, his friend and contemporary.

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Stanze Contadinesche.

Italy has always been celebrated for the talents of its *Improvvisatori*, or extempore poets. Throughout Tuscany, in particular, this custom of reciting verses has for ages been the constant and most favourite amusement of the villagers and country inhabitants. At some times the subject is a trial of wit between two peasants; on other occasions a lover addresses his mistress in a poetical oration, expressing his passion by such images as his uncultivated fancy suggests, and endeavouring to amuse and engage her by the liveliest sallies of humour. These recitations, in which the eclogues of Theocritus are realized, are delivered in a tone of voice between speaking and singing, and are accompanied with the constant motion of one hand, as if to measure the time and regulate the harmony; but they have an additional charm from the simplicity of the country dialect, which abounds with phrases highly natural and appropriate, though incompatible with the precision of a regular language, and forms what is called the *Lingua Contadinesca*[e], of which specimens may be found in

[e] Few attempts have been made in England to adapt the provincial idiom of the inhabitants to the language of poetry. Neither the *Shepherd's Calendar* of Spenser, nor the

in the writings of Boccaccio[f]. The idea of adapting this language to poetry first occurred to

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the *Pastorals* of Gay, possess that native simplicity, and close adherence to the manners and language of country life, which ought to form the basis of this kind of composition. Whether the dialect of Scotland be more favourable to attempts of this nature, or whether we are to seek for the fact in the character of the people, or the peculiar talents of the writers, certain it is, that the idiom of that country has been much more successfully employed in poetical composition, than that of any other part of these kingdoms, and that this practice may there be traced to a very early period. In later times, the beautiful dramatick poem of *The Gentle Shepherd* has exhibited rusticity without vulgarity, and elegant sentiment without affectation. Like the heroes of Homer, the characters of this piece can engage in the humblest occupations without degradation. If to this production we add the beautiful and interesting poems of the Ayrshire ploughman, we may venture to assert, that neither in Italy nor in any other country has this species of poetry been cultivated with greater success. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is perhaps unrivalled in its kind in any language.

[f] *Decam. Giorn.* viii. *Nov.* 2. Bentivegna del Mazzo being interrogated whither he went, replies, *Gnaffe, Sere, in buona verità io vo infino a Città per alcuna mia vicenda, e porto queste cose a Sere Bonacorri di Ginestreto, che m'ajuti di non so che m'ha fatto richiedere per una comparigione del parentorio per lo pericolator suo il guidice del deficio.* That the ancient Romans had also a marked distinction between the

CHAP. V. to Lorenzo de' Medici, who, in his verses entitled *La Nencia da Barberino*[g], has left a very pleasing specimen of it, full of lively imagery and rustick pleasantry[h]. This piece no sooner appeared, than Luigi Pulci attempted to emulate it, in another poem, written in the same stanza, and called *La Beca da Dicomano*[i]; but instead of the more chastised and delicate humour of Lorenzo, the poem of Pulci partakes of the character of his

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the written tongue and the dialect of the country inhabitants, may be inferred from the following lines of Tibullus. *Lib.* ii. *Eleg.* 3.

Ipsa Venus laetos jam nunc migravit in agros,
Verbaque aratoris rustica discit amor.

[g] *Nencia* is probably the rustick appellation of *Lorenza* or *Lorenzina*; thus from *Lorenzo*, in the same dialect, is formed *Nencio* and *Renzo*; and from the diminutive *Lorenzino*, *Nencino* and *Cencino*. In this poem, the rustick, Vallero, also addresses his mistress by the augmentative of *Nenciozza*. These variations are frequently used in the Florentine dialect to express the estimation in which the subject of them is held: thus *ino*, and *iná*, denote a certain degree of affection and tenderness, similar to that which is felt for infants; whilst the augmentatives of *uccio*, *uccia*, *one*, *ona*, usually imply ridicule or contempt.

[h] A few *stanze* from the original will be found in the Appendix, No. XXXIX.

[i] Published with *La Nencia*, in the *Canzoni a ballo*. *Flor.* 1568.

his *Morgante*, and wanders into the burlesque and extravagant. In the following century, Michelagnolo Buonaroti, the nephew of the celebrated artist of the same name, employed this style with great success in his admirable rustick comedy, *La Tancia*[k]; but perhaps the most beautiful instance that Italy has produced, is the work of Francesco Baldovini, who, towards the close of the last century, published his *Lamento di Cecco da Varlungo*[l]; a piece of inimitable wit and simplicity, and which seems to have carried this species of poetry to its highest pitch of perfection.

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If, during the darkness of the middle ages, the drama, that great school of human life and manners,

State of the Italian drama.

[k] The learned Anton Maria Salvini has given an excellent edition of this comedy, with another by the same author, entitled *La Fiera. Firenz.* 1726. The annotations of Salvini upon these pieces are highly and deservedly esteemed.

[l] An elegant edition of this poem was also published at Florence in 1755, in quarto, with copious notes and illustrations by Orazio Marrini; in which the editor has, with great industry and learning, traced the history of rustick poetry in Italy, from the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom he attributes the invention of it (*Pref. p.* 10.), to that of his author Baldovini; and has illustrated the text in the most judicious and satisfactory manner.

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manners, as established among the ancients, was totally lost, it was not without a substitute in most of the nations of Europe, though of a very imperfect and degraded kind. To this factitious species of dramatick representation, which led the minds of the people from the imitation of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and closed their eyes to their excellencies, we are probably to attribute the slow progress which, in the revival of letters, took place in this important department. Innumerable attempts have indeed been made to trace the origin of the modern drama, and the Italians, the Germans, the Spaniards, the French, and the English[m], have successively claimed

[m] Several of our most celebrated criticks have warmly contended for the antiquity of the English stage, which they suppose may be traced higher than the Italian by 150 years; in proof of which is adduced the miracle-play of St. Catherine, said to be written by Geoffry, abbot of St. Alban's, and performed at Dunstable in the year 1110. *v. Malone's Shakspeare, in Pref.* Hence we might be led to conclude that this miracle-play was composed in dialogue; but there is reason to conjecture that the whole consisted of dumb shew, and that the author's only merit lay in the arrangement of the incidents and machinery. Of the same nature were the grotesque exhibitions, well known in this country under the name of the harrowing of Hell (*Tyrwhit's Chaucer, v.* iv. *p.* 243.); and the representations at Florence, mentioned by Villani (*lib.* viii. *c.* 10.) and Ammirato (*lib.* iv.), who inform

claimed priority of each other. But questions of this kind scarcely admit of decision. Imitation is natural to man in every state of society; and where shall we draw the line of distinction between the polished productions of Racine, and

inform us, that in the year 1304, the inhabitants of the district of S. Borgo publickly proclaimed that they would give an insight into the next world to those who would attend upon the bridge of Carrara. A great number of people were accordingly collected together to witness a representation of the infernal regions, which was displayed in boats or rafts upon the river. In this spectacle the damned appeared to be tormented by demons in various forms, and with dreadful shrieks struck the spectators with terrour: when, in the midst of the performance, the bridge, which was of wood, gave way, and the unfortunate attendants became the principal actors in the drama. The interludes preserved among the Harleian MSS. said to have been performed at Chester in 1327, and adverted to by Mr. Malone, are manifestly antedated by nearly two centuries; nor do I conceive it possible to adduce a dramatick composition in the English language that can indisputably be placed before the year 1500, previous to which time they were common in Italy; though possibly not so early as Mr. Malone allows, when he informs us, on the authority of the Histriomastix, that pope Pius II. about the year 1416, composed, and caused to be acted before him, on Corpus Christi day, a mystery, in which was represented the court of the kingdom of heaven. Eneas Sylvius, who assumed that title, was not raised to the pontificial dignity till the year 1458. In the extensive catalogue of his writings by Apostolo Zeno (*Dissert. Voss.*) I find no notice of any such composition.

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and the pantomimes of Bartholomew fair? This propensity to imitation, operating upon the religious or superstitious views of the clergy, produced at length that species of exhibition which was formerly known throughout Europe by the name of Mysteries; but it is probable, that for a long time they were merely calculated to strike the eyes of the spectators. In the city of Florence they were often prepared at the publick expense, and at times by rich individuals, for the purpose of displaying their wealth, and conciliating the publick favour. Four days in the year were solemnly celebrated by the four districts of the city, in honour of their patron saints; but the feast of St. John, the tutelary saint of Florence, was provided, not at the expense of the particular district which bore his name, but of the city at large. The fabrication of these spectacles employed the abilities of the best artists and engineers of the time[n].

It was not, however, till the age of Lorenzo de'Medici, that these ill-judged representations began to assume a more respectable form, and to be united with dialogue. One of the earliest examples of the sacred drama is the *Rappresentazione*

[n] *Vasari, vita di Cecca Ingegnere e di Filippo Brunelleschi.*

sentazione of *S. Giovanni e S. Paolo*[o], by Lorenzo de' Medici. Cionacci conjectures that this piece was written at the time of the marriage of Maddalena, one of the daughters of Lorenzo, to Francesco Cibo, nephew of Innocent VIII. and that it was performed by his own children; there being many passages which seem to be intended as precepts for such as are intrusted with the direction of a state, and which particularly point out the line of conduct which he and his ancestors had pursued, in obtaining and preserving their influence in Florence[p]. The coadjutors

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[o] Of this piece I have two ancient editions without date; one of which, printed at Florence by *Francesco Bonacorsi*, bears sufficient evidence of its having been published during the life of the author. "Se errore "alchuno," says the editor, "trovate nella impressa "opera, quello non ascriviate alle occupazioni del nostro "magnifico Lorenzo; sed indubitatamente lo imputate "allo impressore; perochè chi è solerte, che significa in "omni re prudente, in nessuno tempo è occupato; ma "occupato è sempre che non è solerte." It is also republished by Cionacci amongst the sacred poems of Lorenzo and others. *Fir.* 1680.

[p] Sappiate che chi vuol popol regere,
Debbe pensare al bene universale,
E chi vuol altri dalli error correggere,
Sforzisi prima lui di non far male;

Però

CHAP. V. coadjutors of Lorenzo, in this attempt to meliorate the imperfect state of the drama, were Feo Belcari, Bernardo Pulci and his wife Madonna Antonia de' Tanini[q]. That Lorenzo had it in contemplation to employ dramatick composition in other subjects is also apparent. Among his poems published at the end of the present work will be found an attempt to substitute the deities of Greece and Rome, for the saints and martyrs of

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Però conviensi giusta vita eleggere,
Perchè lo esempio al popol molto vale;
E quel che fa il Signor, fanno poi molti,
Che nel Signor son tutti gli occhi volti.

It must be observed, that St. John and St. Paul, the heroes of this drama, are not the personages of those names mentioned in the sacred writings, but two eunuchs, attendant on the daughter of Constantine the Great, who are put to death by Julian the apostate, for their adherence to the Christian religion.

[q] A considerable collection of the ancient editions of the *Rappresentazioni* of the fifteenth century, printed without date, and formerly in the Pinelli library, has fallen into my hands. I may say of them, with Apostolo Zeno, "trattone alquanti che hanno qualche suco "di buon sapere, mescolato però di agro & di spiacevole, son rancidumi ed inezie; cavate anche da legende "apocrife, e da impure fonti, con basso e pedestre stile, "e d'arte prive, e di grazia poetica."

Annot. alla Bib. Ital. di Fontan. v. i. *pt.* 489.

of the Christian church; but the jealous temper of the national religion seems for a time to have restrained the progress which might otherwise have been expected in this important department of letters. Some years after the death of Lorenzo, a more decided effort was made by Bernardo Accolti, in his drama of *Virginia*, founded on one of the novels of Boccaccio[r]; and this again was followed, at a short interval, by the *Sofonisba* of Trissino, and the *Rosmunda* of Giovanni Rucellai; two pieces which are justly

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[r] *Decam. Gior.* iii. *Nov.* 9. The argument of this piece is given by Accolti in the following sonetto, prefixed to the edition of Flor. 1514:

Virginia amando el Re guarisce, e chiede
Di Salerno el gran principe in marito;
Qual costretto a sposarla, e poi partito
Per mai tornar fin lei viva si vede:
Cerca Virginia scrivendo, mercede,
Ma el principe da molta ira assalito
Gli domanda, s' a lei vuol sia redito,
Due condizion qual impossibil crede.
Però Virginia sola, e travestita,
Partendo, ogn' impossibil conditione
Adempie al fin con prudentia infinita.
Onde el principe pien d' amiratione
Lei di favore, e grazia rivestita
Sposa di nuovo con molta affectione.

CHAP. V. justly considered as the first regular productions of the drama in modern times.

The musical drama.

The origin of the musical drama, or Italian opera, is by general consent attributed to Politiano, who gave the first example of it in his *Orfeo*. The idea of this species of composition seems to have been first suggested by the Eclogues of the ancient Greek and Roman authors; nor does there appear to have been any extraordinary exertion of genius in adapting to musick the sentiments and language of pastoral life; but it should be remembered that the intrinsick merit of any discovery is to be judged of rather by the success with which it is attended, than by the difficulties that were to be surmounted. Of the plan and conduct of this dramatick attempt, a particular account has been given by a very judicious and amusing author[s]. Little, however, is to be expected in point of arrangement, when we understand that it was the hasty production of two days, and was intended merely for the gratification of Gonzaga, cardinal of Mantua, before whom it was first represented. Accordingly, its principal merit consists in the simplicity

[s] *v. Dr. Burney's Gen. Hist. of Musick, v.* iv. *p.* 14.

simplicity and elegance of some of the Lyrick pieces with which it is interspersed. From the early editions of this poem, it appears that the character of Orpheus was first exhibited by the celebrated *Improvvisatore* Baccio Ugolini, whose personal obligations to the cardinal occasioned the introduction of the beautiful Latin ode, in which, by a singular exertion of the *quidlibet audendi*, the Theban bard is introduced singing the praises of the cardinal, but which was afterwards superseded by the verses in praise of Hercules, generally found in the subsequent editions.

In a dedicatory epistle prefixed to this piece, and addressed to Carlo Carnale, the author, whilst he professes himself willing to comply with the wishes of some of his friends by its publication, openly protests against the propriety of such a measure[t]. A species of conduct which, in modern times, might perhaps savour of affectation; but of this we may safely acquit Politiano, who, in the midst of his learned labours,

[t] Viva adunque poi che così ad voi piace, ma ben vi protesto che tale pietà è una expressa crudeltà; e di questo mio giudizio desidero ne sia questa epistola testimonio. *Pol. in Præf.*

CHAP. V. labours, certainly regarded a slight composition in the vulgar tongue as much below his talents and his character.

Canti Carnascialeschi.

During the time of carnival, it was customary to celebrate that festival at Florence with extraordinary magnificence. Among other amusements, it had long been usual to collect together, at great expense, large processions of people, sometimes representing the return of triumphant warriours with trophies, cars, and similar devices; and at other times some story of ancient chivalry. These exhibitions afforded ample scope for the inventive talents of the Florentine artists, who contended with each other in rendering them amusing, extravagant, or terrifick. The pageantry was generally displayed by night, as being the season best calculated to conceal the defects of the performance, and to assist the fancy of the spectators. "It was certainly," says Vasari[n], "an extraordinary sight, to observe twenty or thirty "couple of horsemen, most richly dressed in "appropriate characters, with six or eight "attendants upon each, habited in an uniform "manner, and carrying torches to the amount "of several hundreds, after whom usually fol-

"lowed

[n] *Vasari, vita di Piero di Cosimo.*

"lowed a triumphal car with the trophies and "spoils of victory"—of imaginary victories indeed, but not on that account less calculated to display the ingenuity of the inventer, or less pleasing in the estimation of the philosopher. The promised gaiety of the evening was sometimes unexpectedly interrupted by a moral lesson, and the artist seized the opportunity of exciting those more serious emotions, which the astonished beholders had supposed it was his intention to dissipate. Thus Piero di Cosimo, a painter of Florence, appalled the inhabitants by a representation of the triumph of Death, in which nothing was omitted that might impress upon their minds the sense of their own mortality[v]. Prior, however, to the time of Lorenzo de'

[v] Of this exhibition, which took place about the year 1512, Vasari has left a very particular account. (*Vita di Piero di Cosimo.*) The same author has preserved the following lines of the *Carro della Morte*, sung upon this occasion, which was the composition of Antonio Alamanni:

"Morti siam come vedete,
"Così morti vedrem voi,
"Fummo già come voi siete,
"Voi sarete come noi."

The whole piece is published in the *Canti Carnascialeschi. p.* 131. *Ed.* 1559.

CHAP. V.

de' Medici, these exhibitions were calculated merely to amuse the eye, or were at most accompanied by the insipid madrigals of the populace. It was he who first taught his countrymen to dignify them with sentiment, and add to their poignancy by the charms of poetry[w]. It is true, the examples which he has himself given of these compositions, in the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs, being calculated for the gratification of the multitude, and devoted only to the amusement of an evening, exhibit not any great energy of thought, nor are they distinguished by an equal degree of poetical ornament with his other works. Their merits are therefore principally to be estimated by the purity of the Florentine diction, which is allowed to be there preserved in its most unadulterated state[x]. The intervention and patronage of Lorenzo

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[w] Questo modo di festeggiare fu trovato dal Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici, uno dei primi e più chiari splendori ch' abbia havuto non pure la illustrissima e nobilissima casa vostra, e Firenze, ma Italia ancora, e il mondo tutto quanto; degno veramente di non esser ricordato mai nè senza lagrime, nè senza riverenza.

Il Lasca, ad Sig. Francesco de' Medici. Canti Carnascialeschi, in princ. Flor. 1559.

[x] These pieces, as well as the other poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, are frequently cited by the academicians della Crusca,

Lorenzo gave new spirit to these amusements. Induced by his example, many of his contemporaries employed their talents in these popular compositions, which were continued by a numerous succession of writers, till the middle of the ensuing century, when they were diligently collected by Anton Francesco Grazzini, commonly called *Il Lasca*, and published at Florence in the year 1559[y]. CHAP. V.

The

Crusca, in their celebrated dictionary, as authorities for the Italian tongue: and consequently compose a part of those works selected for the purity of their style, and known by the name of *Testi di lingua*.

[y] This was not, however, the first edition of the *Canti Carnascialeschi*. Zeno, in his notes on the *Bibl. Ital.* of Fontanini (*v.* ii. *p.* 83.), has cited two editions printed without note of date or place, but prior, as he thought, to the year 1500; the first entitled *Canzone per andare in Maschera*, the latter *Ballattette del Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, di M. Agnolo Poliziano, e di Bernardo Giamburlari.* The edition of 1559 is, however, the first general collection of these pieces, towards which a great number of the natives of Florence contributed. Of this edition the greater part of the copies are mutilated, having been deprived of 100 pages about the middle of the book; viz. from page 298 to page 398, in which space were contained the pieces of Battista dell' Ottonajo, whose brother Paolo having remonstrated against their publication in a surreptitious manner, and in an inaccurate state, had sufficient

CHAP. V.

Canzoni a ballo.

The *Ganzoni a ballo* are compositions of a much more singular and inexplicable kind. From their denomination it is probable, that they were sung by companies of young people, in concert with the musick to which they danced; and the measure of the verse appears to be so constructed as to fall in with the different movements and pauses. It may perhaps be thought that

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sufficient influence with the government of Florence to obtain an order that the printer, Torrentino, should deliver up all the copies in his hands, which appeared to be 495; after a year's litigation the poems of Ottonajo were ordered to be cut out from the book, and Paolo was left at liberty to publish another edition of them, which he accordingly did. This dispute gave rise to another contest during the present century, between the Canonico Biscioni, late librarian of the grand duke's library at Florence, and Sig. Rinaldo Maria Bracci, who published at Pisa, under the date of Cosmopoli 1750, a new edition of the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, in two volumes quarto, including those of Ottonajo, from the impression of his brother Paolo; in the introduction to which he justifies the decree that suppressed these pieces in the edition of 1559, contrary to the opinion of Biscioni, who considered it as severe and unjust. The dispute seems of little importance; but the result of it was unfavourable to the modern editor, whose elegant and apparently correct edition of these poems has never obtained that credit amongst the literati of Italy, to which, on many accounts, it appears to be entitled. I shall give one of these poems in the Appendix, being the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, by Lorenzo de' Medici. *v. App. No.* XL.

that the extreme licentiousness of some of these pieces militates against such an idea; but in the state of manners in Italy at that period, this objection can have but little weight. Indeed, if we trace to its source this favourite amusement, we shall probably discover, that a dance is in fact only a figurative representation of the passion of love, exhibited with more or less delicacy according to the character and state of civilization of those who practise it. To improve its relish, and heighten its enjoyment, seems to have been the intention of the *Canzoni a ballo*. From the known affability of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the festivity of his disposition, as well as from other circumstances[x], there is reason

[x] In the edition of the *Canzoni a ballo*, published at Florence in 1568, the title-page is ornamented with a print in wood, of which the following is a copy, representing twelve women dancing before the palace of the Medici, known by the arms affixed to it, and singing, as we may presume, a dancing song. Towards the front of the print appears Lorenzo de' Medici; two females kneel before him, one of whom presents him with a garland taken from her head, of which he seems to decline the acceptance. Behind Lorenzo stands Agnolo Politiano, his associate in this work. This print seems to have a more particular reference to one of the songs written by Lorenzo, which became extremely popular by the name of *Ben venga Maggio*, and which the reader will find in the Appendix, No. XLI. In an ancient collection of *Laude*,

CHAP. V. reason to conclude, that he was accustomed to mingle with the populace on these mirthful occasions,

Laude, or hymns, printed at Venice in 1512, I find that several of these devout pieces are directed to be sung to the air of *Ben venga Maggio*. From this collection it appears

sions, and to promote and direct their amuse- CHAP. V.
ments. Nor are we to wonder that the arbiter of the politicks of Italy should be employed in the streets of Florence, participating the mirth, and directing the evolutions, of a troop of dancing girls. On the contrary, this versatility of talent and of disposition may be considered as the most distinguishing feature in the character of this extraordinary man; who, from the most important concerns of state, and the highest speculations of philosophy, could stoop to partake of the humblest diversions of the populace, and who in every department obtained, by general consent, the supreme direction and control.

Thus far we have taken a review of the chief part of the poems which yet remain of Lorenzo

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appears that it was then a general custom in Italy, as it now is, or lately was, the practice of a certain sect in this country, to sing pious hymns to the most profane and popular melodies, for the purpose of stimulating the languid piety of the performers, by an association with the vivacity of sensual enjoyments. Thus the hymn *Jesu sommo diletto*, is sung to the musick of *Leggiadra damigella*; *Jesu fammi morire*, to that of *Vaga bella e gentile*; *Genetrice di Dio*, to that of *Dolce anima mia*; and *Crucifisso a capo chino*, to that of *Una Donna d' amor fino*, one of the most indecent pieces in the *Canzoni a ballo*.

CHAP. V. Lorenzo de' Medici, and have seen him, by his own example, stimulating his countrymen to the pursuits of literature. The restorer of the Lyrick poetry of Italy, the promoter of the dramatick, the founder of the satirick, rustick, and other modes of composition, he is not merely entitled to the rank of a poet, but may justly be placed among the distinguished few, who, by native strength, have made their way through paths before untrodden. Talent may follow and improve; emulation and industry may polish and refine; but genius alone can break those barriers that restrain the throng of mankind in the common track of life.

Critique of Pico of Mirandula, on the poems of Lorenzo.

The poetical merits of Lorenzo de' Medici were perceived and acknowledged by his contemporaries. Were we to collect the various testimonies of respect and admiration that were produced in honour of him in different parts of Italy, they would form a very unreasonable addition to the present volume. We must not, however, omit to notice the opinion of Pico of Mirandula, who, in a letter addressed to Lorenzo, has entered into a full discussion of the character of his writings, comparing them with those of his predecessors Dante and Petrarca, and contending that they unite the vigour of thought apparent in the former, with the harmony

mony and polish of the latter[a]. Succeeding critickes have, however, appealed against a decision, which seems to attribute to Lorenzo de' Medici a superiority over the great masters of the Tuscan poetry; and have considered the opinion of Pico either as an instance of courtly adulation, or as a proof of the yet imperfect taste of the age[b]. Without contending for the opinion

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[a] This letter, which has occasioned so much animadversion, is given in the Appendix, No. XLII.

[b] "A questo s'aggiunge che Giovanni Pico Conte "della Mirandola, uomo di singolarrissimo ingegno e "dottrina, in una lettera latina, la quale egli scrisse al "Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici vecchio—non solo lo pareggia, ma lo prepone indubitatamente così a Dante come "al Petrarca, perchè al Petrarca (dic' egli) mancano le "cose, cioè i concetti, e a Dante le parole, cioè l' elo-"quenza; dove in Lorenzo non si desideremo nè l'une "nè l'altre. Le quali cose egli mai affermate così preci-"samente non arebbe, se i giudicj di quel secol fossero "stati sani, e gli orecchi non corrotti." *Varchi Ercolano, p.* 27. *Ed. Com.* 1744. The same author, however, after acquitting Pico of the charge of adulation, subjoins: "Nè sarebbe mancata materia al Pico di potere vera-"mente commendare Lorenzo, senza biasimare non "veramente il Petrarca, e Dante; perchè nel vero egli "con M. Agnolo Poliziano, e Girolamo Benevieni furono "i primi i quali comminciassero nel comporre a ritirarsi "e discostarsi dal volgo, e, se non imitare, a volere, o "parere di volere imitare il Petrarca, e Dante, lasciando "in parte quella maniera del tutto vile, e plebea, la quale "assai

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opinion of Pico in its full extent, we may be allowed to remark, that the temper and character both of him and of Lorenzo are equally adverse to the idea, that the one could offer, or the other be gratified, with unmerited approbation and spurious praise; and that Pico was not deficient in the qualifications of a critick may appear even from the very letter which has been cited as an impeachment of his taste. For although he there treats the writings of Dante and Petrarca with great severity, and asserts not only the equality, but, in a certain point of view, the superiority of those of Lorenzo, yet he clearly proves that he had attentively studied these productions, and by many acute and just observations demonstrates, that he was well qualified to appreciate their various merits and defects. Nor does Pico, in avowing this opinion, stand alone amongst his countrymen. Even in the most enlightened period of the ensuing century, the pretensions of Lorenzo de' Medici to rank with the great fathers of the Italian tongue, are supported by an author whose testimony cannot be suspected of partiality, and whose authority will be acknowledged as

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" assai chiaramente si reconosce ancora eziandio nel " *Morgante Maggiore* di Luigi Pulci, e nel *Ciriffo Calva-* " *neo* di Luca suo Fratello."

as generally as his writings are known[c]. The most celebrated literary historians of Italy, in adverting to the age of Lorenzo, have acknowledged the vigour of his genius, and the success of his labours; Crescimbeni, in tracing the vicissitudes of the Tuscan poetry, informs us, that it had risen to such perfection under the talents of Petrarca, that not being susceptible of farther improvement, it began, in the common course of earthly things, to decline; and in a short time was so debased and adulterated, as nearly to revert to its pristine barbarity. "But at this "critical juncture," says the same well-informed author[d], "a person arose who preserved it "from ruin, and who snatched it from the "dangerous precipice that seemed to await it. "This

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Opinions of other authors on the same subject.

[c] Non so adunque come sia bene in luogo d' arrichir questa lingua, e darle spirito, grandezza, e lume, farla povera, esile, umile ed oscura, e cercare di metterla in tante angustie che ognuno sia sforzato ad imitare solamente il Petrarca e'l Boccaccio, e che nella lingua non si debba ancor credere al Poliziano, a *Lorenzo de' Medici*, a Francesco Diaceto e ad alcuni altri, che pur sono Toscani, e forse di non minor dottrina e giudicio, che si fosse il Petrarca e'l Boccaccio.

Castiglione Il Cortegiano, lib. i.

[d] *Della volgar Poesia. v.* ii. *p.* 323.

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"This was Lorenzo de' Medici, from whose "abilities it received that support of which it "then stood so greatly in need; who, amidst "the thickest gloom of that barbarism which "had spread itself throughout Italy, exhibited, "whilst yet a youth, a simplicity of style, a "purity of language, a happiness of versifica- "tion, a propriety of poetical ornament, and "a fulness of sentiment, that recalled once "more the graces and the sweetness of Petrarca." If, after paying due attention to these authorities, we consider, that the two great authors with whose excellencies Lorenzo is supposed to contend, employed their talents chiefly in one species of composition, whilst his were exercised in various departments; that during a long life, devoted to letters, they had leisure to correct, to polish, and to improve their works, so as to bear the inspection of critical minuteness, whilst those of Lorenzo must in general have been written with almost extemporaneous haste, and, in some instances, scarcely perhaps obtained the advantages of a second revisal; we must be compelled to acknowledge, that the inferiority of his reputation as a poet has not arisen from a deficiency of genius, but must be attributed to the avocations of his publick life, the multiplicity of his domestick concerns, the interference of other studies and amusements, and his untimely death.

death[e]. When therefore we estimate the number, the variety, and the excellence of his poetical works, it must be admitted, that if those talents, which, under so many obstacles and disadvantages, are still so conspicuous, had been directed to one object, and allowed to exert themselves to their full extent, it is in the highest degree probable, that, in point of poetick excellence, Italy had not boasted a more illustrious name than that of Lorenzo de' Medici.

The poems of Lorenzo celebrated in the *Nutricia* of Politiano.

In dismissing this subject, it may yet be allowed to point out one tribute of respect to the poetical character of Lorenzo, which may serve at the same time to illustrate a passage in an author, who, though a modern, deserves the appellation of classical. This will be found at the close of the *Sylva* of Politiano, entitled *Nutricia*, which will scarcely be intelligible to the reader, without some previous acquaintance with the writings of Lorenzo, as the author has there, in a small compass, particularly celebrated most of the productions of his patron's pen.

Nec

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[e] Se la sua vita fosse più lungamente durata, e se quella ch' egli menò, fosse stata più sciolta dalle cure famigliari, e politiche, sto per dire, che avrebbe ancor quel secolo avuto il suo Petrarca.

Murat. della Perfetta Poesia Ital. v. i. *p.* 20.

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Nec tamen ALIGERUM fraudarim hoc munere DANTEM,
Per Styga, per stellas, mediique per ardua montis
Pulchra BEATRICIS sub virginis ora volantem.
Quique cupidineum repetit PETRARCHA triumphum.
Et qui bis quinis centum argumenta diebus
Pingit, et obscuri qui semina monstrat amoris:
Unde tibi immensæ veniunt præconia laudis,
Ingeniis, opibusque potens, FLORENTIA mater.

Tu verò æternum per avi vestigia COSMI,
Perque patris (quis enim pietate insignior illo?)
Ad famam eluctans, cujus securus ad umbram
Fulmina bellorum ridens procul aspicit Arnus.

Nor ALIGHIERI, shall thy praise be lost,
Who from the confines of the Stygian coast,
As BEATRICE led thy willing steps along,
To realms of light, and starry mansions sprung;
Nor PETRARCH thou, whose soul-dissolving strains
Rehearse, O love! thy triumphs and thy pains:
Nor HE, whose hundred tales the means impart,
To wind the secret snare around the heart,
Be these thy boast, O FLORENCE! these thy pride,
Thy sons! whose genius spreads thy glory wide.

And thou LORENZO, rushing forth to fame,
Support of COSMO's and of PIERO's name!
Safe in whose shadow Arno hears from far,
And smiles to hear, the thunder of the war;

Mæoniæ

Mæoniæ caput, O LAURENS, quem plena senatu
Curia, quemque gravi populus stupet ore loquentem,
Si fas est, tua nunc humili patere otia cantu,
Secessusque sacros avidas me ferre sub auras.
Namque importunas mulcentem pectine curas,
Umbrosæ recolo te quondam vallis in antrum
Monticolam traxisse deam; vidi ipse corollas
Nexantem, numerosque tuos prona aure bibentem:
Viderunt socii pariter, seu grata Dianæ
Nympha fuit, quamquam nullæ sonuere pharetræ:
Seu soror Aonidum, et nostræ tunc hospita sylvæ.
Illa tibi, lauruque tuâ, semperque recenti
Flore comam cingens, pulchrum inspiravit amorem,
Mox et Apollineis audentem opponere nervis
Pana leves calamos nemoris sub rupe Pheræi,

Endow'd with arts the listening throng to move,
The senate's wonder, and the people's love,
Chief of the tuneful train! thy praises hear,
—If praise of mine can charm thy cultur'd ear;
For once, the lonely woods and vales among,
A mountain-goddess caught thy soothing song,
As swelled the notes, she pierc'd the winding dell,
And sat beside thee in thy secret cell;
I saw her hands the laurel chaplet twine,
Whilst with attentive ear she drank the sounds divine.
Whether the nymph to Dian's train allied,
—But sure no quiver rattled at her side;
Or from th' Aonian mount, a stranger guest,
She chose awhile in these green woods to rest—

Carmine

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Carmine dum celebras[f], eadem tibi virgo vocanti
Astitit, et sanctos nec opina afflavit honores.
Ergo et nocticanum per te Galatea Corinthum[g]
Jam non dura videt: nam quis flagrantia nescit
Vota, Cupidineoque ardentes igne querelas?
Seu tibi Phœbeis audax concurrere flammis[h]
Claro stella die, seu lutea floro sequaci

Thro' all thy frame while softer passions breathe,
Around thy brows she bound the laureate wreathe;
—And still—as other themes engaged thy song,
She with unrivall'd sweetness touch'd thy tongue;
To tell the contest on Thessalia's plains,
When Pan with Phœbus tried alternate strains[f],
Or Galatea, who no more shall slight
Corynthus' song, that soothes the ear of night[g].
—But who shall all thy varying strains disclose,
As sportive fancy prompts, or passion glows?
When to thine aid thou call'st the solar beams,
And all their dazzling lustre round thee flames[h],

Infelix

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[f] *Capitolo del Canto del Pan*, a dramatick pastoral.

[g] The address of the Shepherd Corynthus to Galatea, commencing,

"*La luna in mezzo alle minori stelle.*"

[h] *Sonetto* 66.

"*O chiara stella che co' raggi tuoi.*"

Infelix Clytie[i], seu mentem semper oberrans
Forma subit dominæ[k], seu pulchræ gaudia mortis[l],
Atque pium tacto jurantem pectore amorem[m],
Atque oculos canis[n], atque manus[o], niveisque capillos

Or sing'st of Clytie, sunward still inclined[i];
Or the dear nymph whose image fills thy mind[k];
Of dreams of love, and love's extremest joy[l];
Of vows of truth and endless constancy[m];
Or of those eyes a thousand flames that dart[n];
That hand that binds in willing chains thy heart[o];

Infusos

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[i] *Sonetto* 67,
"*Quando il sol giù dall' oriente scende.*"

[k] *Sonetto* 103.
"*Lasso, or la bella donna mia che face?*"

[l] *Sonetto* 86.
"*O veramente felice e beata*
Notte."

[m] *Sonetto* 99.
"*Amorosi sospir, e quali uscite.*"

[n] *Sonetto* 88,
"*Ove Madonna volge gli occhi begli.*"

[o] *Sonetto* 78.
"*O man mia soavissima e decora.*"

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Infusos humeris[p], et verba[q], et lene sonantis
Murmur aquæ[r], violæque comas[s], blandumque soporem,
Lætaque quam dulcis suspiria fundat amaror[t];

The tresses o'er those ivory shoulders thrown[p];
The secret promise, made to thee alone[q];
The stream's soft murmur[r], and the violet's glow[s],
And love's embittered joys and rapturous woe[t];

Quantum

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[p] *Sonetto* 73.
"*Spesso mi torna a mente anzi giammai.*"

[q] *Sonetto* 91.
"*Mandonna io veggo ne' vostri occhi belli.*"

[r] *Sonetto* 75.
"*Chiar' acque i sento del vostro mormorio.*"

[s] *Sonetto* 80.
"*Belle fresche e purpuree viole.*"

Or perhaps 114.
"*Non di verdi giardin ornati e colti.*"

[t] *Sonetto* 39.
"*Io son si certo amor di tua incertezza.*"

Quantum addat formæ pietas[u], quàm sæpe decenter
Palleat, utque tuum foveat cor pectore Nymphæ[v].
Non vacat argutosque sales, Satyraque Bibaces
Descriptos memorare senes[w]; non carmina festis
Excipienda choris, querulasve animantia chordas[x].
Idem etiam tacitæ referens pastoria vitæ
Otia[y], et urbanos thyrso extimulante labores;
Mox fugis in cœlum, non ceu per lubrica nisus,
Extremamque boni gaudes contingere metam[z].

How pity adds to beauty's brightest charms[u];
And how thy bosom beats with soft alarms[v];
Nor wants there sprightly satire's vivid beam,
Whose lustre lights th' inebriate fools to fame[w];
Nor choral songs whose animating sound
Provokes the smile, and bids the dance go round[x],
—Then free from babbling crowds, and city noise,
Thou sing'st the pleasures rural life enjoys[y];
Or with no faltering step, pursuest thy way,
To touch the confines of celestial day[z].

Quodque

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[u] *Sonetto* 56.

"*Talbor mi prega dolcemente amore.*"

[v] *Sonetto* 141.

"*Dura memoria, perchè non ti spegni.*"

[w] The *Beoni*, or satire against drunkenness.

[x] *Canzoni a ballo.*

[y] *Altercazione*, or a dialogue between a shepherd and citizen.

[z] *Rime sacre, &c.*

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Quodque alii studiumque vocant, durumque laborem
Hic tibi ludus erit; fessus civilibus actis,
Huc is emeritas acuens ad carmina vires.
Felix ingenio, felix cui pectore tantas
Instaurare vices, cui fas tam magna capaci.
Alternare animo, et varias ita nectere curas.

—These the delights thy happiest moments share,
Thy dearest lenitives of publick care:
Blest in thy genius! thy capacious mind
Nor to one science, nor one theme confined,
By grateful interchange fatigue beguiles,
In private studies and in publick toils.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.